God.
372·6
Pre/mas
69457

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 11 March, 2020

THE

MASTERY OF LANGUAGES;

OR, THE ART OF

SPEAKING FOREIGN TONGUES

IDIOMATICALLY.

BY

THOMAS PRENDERGAST,

FORMERLY OF HER MAJESTY'S CIVIL SERVICE AT MADRAS.

6c.457
ac
G al 2

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1864.

God
372·6
Pre/Mas
69457

LONDON:
PRINTED BY C. W. REYNELL, LITTLE PULTENEY STREET,
HAYMARKET, W.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
CHAPTER I.—Analysis of the Process followed by Children	1
„ II.—Outline of the Scheme . . .	19
„ III.—Memory	29
„ IV.—Evolutions of Language . . .	49
Coupled Sentences	*60
„ V.—The Process	69
„ VI.—On the Selection of Sentences . .	105
„ VII.—On Fluency and Learning by Rote .	135
„ VIII.—Pronunciation	145
„ IX.—English	157
A List of the Commonest English Words, Declinable and Indeclinable . .	164
Samples of Sentences containing from Twenty to Thirty of the Commonest Words .	165
Paradigm or Synopsis, showing the Variations of the Commonest Declinable Words in the English Language . . .	166
„ X.—Teloogoo	167
Paradigm of the Commonest Inflections in Teloogoo	184
Teloogoo Sentences . . .	*184
„ XI.—Hindustani	185
Hindustani Sentences . . .	187
Hindustani Paradigm, or Synopsis of the Terminations of all the Variable parts of Speech	188
„ XII.—On Grammar	189
„ XIII.—On Book-Work . . .	217
„ XIV.—Miscellaneous Notes, and The Labyrinth .	223
NOTE	259

PREFACE.

THE design of this treatise is to show by an analysis of the child's process,—

1. That the power of speaking foreign languages idiomatically, may be attained with facility by adults without going abroad.

2. That sentences may be so formulated, in all languages, that when they are thoroughly learned, the results evolved therefrom will in each new lesson double the number of idiomatic combinations previously acquired.

3. That the acquisition of unconnected words is comparatively worthless, because they have not that property of expansion.

4. That the preliminary study of grammar is unnecessary.

5. That the power of speaking other tongues idiomatically is attained principally by efforts of the memory, not by logical reasonings.

6. That the capacity of the memory for the retention of foreign words is universally over-estimated; and that every beginner ought, in reason, to ascertain by experiments the precise extent of his own individual power.

7. That inasmuch as a word, not perfectly retained by the memory, cannot be correctly reproduced, the beginner ought to restrict himself within the limit of his ascertained capacity.

8. That he should therefore avoid seeing or hearing one word in excess of those which he is actually engaged in committing to memory.

9. That the mere perusal of a grammar clogs the memory with imperfect recollections of words, and fractions of words; and therefore it is interdicted.

10. That, nevertheless, the beginner who adopts this method, will not fail to speak grammatically.

11. That the most notable characteristic of the child's process, is that he speaks fluently

and idiomatically with a very small number of words.

12. That the epitome of language made by children, all the world over, is substantially the same.

13. That when a child can employ two hundred words of a foreign tongue, he possesses a practical knowledge of all the syntactical constructions, and of all the foreign sounds.

14. That every foreign language should therefore be epitomized for a beginner, by the framing of a set of strictly practical sentences, embodying two hundred of the most useful words, and comprising all the most difficult constructions.

15. That by "mastering" such an epitome, in the manner prescribed, a beginner will obtain the greatest possible results, with the smallest amount of exertion; whilst, at the same time, he will have abundant leisure to bestow upon the pronunciation that prominent attention to which it is entitled.

The theory on which the scheme is based is

that whatever we undertake to learn, should be learned *thoroughly;* that no exertion is called forth in reproducing what has been so acquired; that if it be repeated daily it cannot be forgotten; that long sentences are more useful than short ones, because many of the lesser are contained in the greater, and are deducible from them by subdivision; that the treachery of the memory may be effectually neutralized, by always hearing or seeing the lesson afresh, before any effort is made to reproduce it; that the action of the memory is more vigorous in frequent short efforts, than in continuous application; that the formation of habit coincides with that principle; and that a pursuit, which is not beyond the capacity of very young children, ought not to be conducted as if it were a severe intellectual undertaking.

In theory, some of these propositions are admitted, but in practice the first lessons are not thoroughly acquired; they are not thoroughly amalgamated; the memory is overloaded; and the sentences are too short, and too much limited by technical considerations.

A remedy for this want of *thoroughness* can only be found in the establishment of some test which can neither be impugned nor evaded; for a standard which is not stringently applied, is a mere delusion. We ought to avail ourselves of all those compensations which nature has provided for the feebleness of the intellectual powers during childhood. That perfect "mastery" over their vernacular tongue which children display, as they advance step by step, must be relentlessly exacted in relation to each foreign sentence committed to memory, and to each branch into which the beginner may think fit to divide his operations.

This method is specially designed to meet the wants of adults, and to foster the invaluable process of self-instruction. It combines "unity with progress." As it only professes to be an exposition of phenomena which have come under everyone's observation, the want of novelty may not be considered altogether unpardonable. There may not be one idea which has not been forestalled by the thousands of able men who have given their lives to the

study of the art of learning languages. But as there has been no clear enunciation of the universality and energy of that principle which is traceable in the operations of every one who has attained colloquial success, whether with or without methodical procedure, this work is not altogether unnecessary.

Sages are constantly remarking that there is no royal road to learning. But the iron rail is a right royal improvement on the highways of our forefathers; and the ocean steamer surpasses all their conceptions of the perfectibility of navigation. Our communications with foreign nations have attained an astonishing development; but no parallel facilitation of the intercourse between man and man has been effected, although its importance in relation to all that concerns the best and highest interests of our race, is incalculable.

Complicated and erudite schemes are generally received with approbation; but it is hard to persuade men to condescend to a simplification of the process followed by children. Nevertheless, the searcher for truth

will doubtless extend his indulgence to this attempt to decipher a neglected page in the book of nature. The crude suggestions here put forth may perhaps fall into the hands of practical men, who will apply them to the formation of a sound system for promoting an elegant accomplishment; for securing economy of time and labour; for enabling any individual residing abroad to disseminate a knowledge of his own language; and for qualifying many to go forth into all lands, and preach the Gospel of Peace.

August 1864.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS FOLLOWED BY CHILDREN.

THERE are certain maxims which have exercised a most pernicious influence in deterring people from the study of languages, and from the investigations requisite to lead to the discovery of the proper method of acquiring them.

It is currently believed, on the authority of great names, that the aptitude which we display in childhood is lost by degrees as we grow to maturity; and that there is a special faculty which characterizes the linguist, without which no great or rapid progress can reasonably be expected.

But we have no proof that any of our powers begin to decay in early life, nor are we in possession of any analysis of the infantile process, complete enough to enable us to determine by what method, or by what concurrence of accidents,

it happens that every child acquires an idiomatic power over the language of those among whom his lot may be cast. We may, therefore, repudiate those maxims, and thus get rid of the two chief obstacles which we encounter on the threshold.

In other pursuits we work upon certain intelligible principles, and we gradually obtain definite results, commensurate with our efforts; but no true mode of action has been laid down, whereby an educated man, even when residing abroad, can reasonably expect to acquire a free colloquial use of a foreign language, without going through a course of study, which is always either tedious or laborious, and which, in many instances, proves unavailing.

The scholar fails in spite of the advantages he possesses in having access to the accumulated learning, and the combined experience and skill of all Christendom. And yet every one of his children, unless subjected to counteracting influences, accomplishes the task without books, without study, and without instruction. This is a mystery which he does not even attempt to solve, because he believes that the child has one more faculty than is possessed by the man.

But uneducated men often learn to speak foreign tongues in a few weeks, without any of the appliances of science. In such persons it is obvious that the aptitude has extended beyond the

period of childhood: but then they are declared to be endowed with that special faculty, which, though it does not indicate any intellectual superiority, is not enjoyed by ordinary mortals. Thus the question is universally evaded and shelved.

It is a very unpalatable fact that people of the slenderest capacity are found to surpass men of brilliant talents in this pursuit, but the only safe conclusion that can be drawn, is that the latter have worked on erroneous principles, and have widely deviated from the true course.

The object of this work is to show that, in the infantile process, there lies latent a method absolutely perfect, which is within the compass of the feeblest intellect, but the principle of which has never been satisfactorily expounded.

The late Cardinal Mezzofanti, indisputably the greatest linguist that ever lived, has passed away from among us, leaving his plan of learning languages unrevealed. But there is good reason to doubt whether he had any fixed principle of action, because none of his admirers could ever discover one, and there was great inequality in the results of his various efforts. His biographer relates that he possessed a retentive memory, a quick ear, and an incredible flexibility of the organs of speech. He constantly filled his head with new words; he learned every new grammar, and applied himself to every strange dictionary, but he vaguely

described his talent as a "mere physical endowment, a thing of instinct, almost of routine."

Some think that he was too vain of his pre-eminence to divulge his secret, and others that he had none to reveal. At all events, his labours have been fruitless; and we have obtained no useful suggestions either from him, or from any other great linguist, to indicate the true method of beginning to learn foreign tongues. On the other hand, there appears to be nothing, either in their practice or in their writings, to controvert the notion that any person who adopts the principle of the method employed by children, may learn to speak a foreign tongue more expeditiously and more idiomatically than many linguists who commence their operations by learning grammar, and studying the best authors, according to the methods generally prevailing.

A child, living in daily association with foreigners, acquires two or three languages at once, and speaks them all fluently, idiomatically, and without intermixture. He learns them, not unconsciously nor without effort, but without tuition, without one idea of the nature of the science of grammar, and without any philosophical reasoning. This is a feat which baffles the efforts of men of the highest endowments, and of the best education.

If it be true that a great increase of power results from the development of our faculties by

education, whence arises the supposed inability of adults to compete with children in respect to the employment of idiomatic forms of speech? There is one very obvious reason which outweighs everything that can be put into the balance against it. It is because we do not pursue the same course that they do. Let us, therefore, track them closely; for if we tread in their footsteps, we must be in the right path, and the result will show that we have not lost the aptitude of childhood.

Many conflicting and unsatisfactory reasons are assigned for the wonderful success of children, viz., their greater power of concentrating their attention; their freedom from care, from prejudice, and from distraction; their elasticity of mind; the flexibility of their vocal organs; their greater quickness and retentiveness of memory; the non-development of those powers of discrimination and of comparison which adults exercise to their own disadvantage; their greater need impelling them to greater exertions; their constantly hearing a language spoken, and thus learning by the aid of an ear uncorrupted; their greater delicacy of ear; their greater impressibility; and, finally, their having a brain unoccupied, and thus better adapted for the reception of new words and ideas, like a sheet of paper, whereon what is first written, although covered by innumerable new scribblings from day to day, is boldly asserted to be ineffaceable and indestructible.

As children talk long before they are able to reason about words, some hold that the gift of speech is altogether independent of the intellectual faculties, and that it is merely the result of a physiological function. Many contend that there can be no method in the process, because none is discernible. No doubt, the operations of infants, individually considered, are perplexingly unscientific and inconsistent, and to all appearance destitute of any indication of an orderly or systematic procedure. But when we reflect that, for six thousand years, myriads of successful experiments have been carried on unceasingly by children, in every region of the earth,—and that, in spite of their inexperience, their intellectual weakness, and the total want of concert among them, instances of failure are almost unknown,—we are driven irresistibly to the conclusion that there must be some method in operation; and it is time that that method should be investigated and explained.

As we have already found one good and sufficient cause why we fail in competing with children, it is needless to examine all those suggestions which have been devised to vindicate the theory of our inferiority to our former selves. Instead of this, let us try to collate all the facts that we can find, connected with the infantile mode of procedure, in order to ascertain how they harmonize with each other, and to resolve them into a

practical system, which shall be consistent with reason and general experience.

Being endowed with great sagacity in interpreting looks, tones, and gestures, infants begin to understand what is addressed to them long before they know the meaning of the individual words, and they receive credit for knowing all that they seem to understand. The wonder is that they understand at the same time so much language, and so few words.

But we are not envious of their power of understanding what they hear, because we are not inferior to them in that respect. It is in speaking idiomatically that adults generally fail, and children always succeed. In this respect alone they excel us, and this is the object of our inquiry.

It is useless to attempt to analyse mental processes, or to divide the words which a child understands and recollects, more or less perfectly, into various classes, according to the degrees in which they are severally known to him. But there is a classification on a simple plan, which is eminently precise. It divides words into the known and the unknown, or those learned perfectly, and those learned imperfectly.

In order to determine with precision how many and what words they know, we must observe those combinations which they employ without being prompted or assisted. Up to this stage they have

been led and guided by their mothers and nurses, from whom they have learned the utterance of words, and in whose hands they have been passive instruments; but now they begin to teach themselves by imitating and repeating complete sentences. This is the true commencement of that independent process of self-instruction which we have to investigate, to methodize, and to adopt.

As words are not language, except when they are united in idiomatic combinations, we class among the unknown all those which they employ unconnectedly. On the other hand, by analysing their sentences, we discover the number of words really and practically known to them; and the result proves how very small a number suffices to produce that astonishing variety of expression which loquacious children display.

Their eagerness in learning to talk, and the perseverance and earnestness with which they apply themselves to the reiteration of any form of speech which pleases their fancy, are the sources of their success in pronouncing and in reproducing whole sentences. They show their intelligent appreciation of these, by gradually interweaving with them the single words which they have previously learned. As they advance, they employ sentences in which will be found many words which they do not thoroughly understand, and some common phrases, the precise meaning of which they do not, and

need not, and perhaps never will comprehend, because they puzzle the grammarian himself. Nevertheless as we are now treating solely of their power of speaking in sentences, we class among the words which children know, every one of those which they use correctly in combination.

Over these they have acquired, by their own exertions, the right of possession and the power of ownership. These, as the word "vernacular" suggests, are the little home-bred slaves that come and go at their bidding, and over which they exercise absolute mastery and control, when they use the gift of speech.

Their imitative faculty is always in active operation, prompting them to echo and re-echo what they hear; but more especially those truly practical sentences, by means of which they obtain the gratification of their desires. And because the latter are very numerous, and are continually recurring, the sentences which relate to them are reiterated so often, that they gradually become domiciled in the memory, and in course of time they seem to issue spontaneously from the lips, as if they were the natural expression of those desires. But in reality they are called forth by repeated efforts of memory, which, by the agency of habit, become slighter and slighter, till at last they are quite inappreciable. But habit is second nature, and that which is the result of confirmed habit

becomes so easy, that it is to all appearance involuntary, and, in common parlance, is said to be natural.

As the stock of sentences which they learn depends mainly on the chance utterances of others; as they are often checked and interrupted, when they ought to be aided and encouraged in their persevering, but tiresome reiteration of a new sentence; and as they are wayward and capricious in bestowing their attention; it often happens that clever children are slow, while stupid ones are comparatively quick in learning to talk. It will be shown hereafter that their progress in speaking is regulated by the practical utility of those sentences which they acquire, and by their assiduity in employing them, with other words interchanged.

Amongst all their mistakes and deficiencies, it must be borne in mind that they are sadly puzzled by hearing many sentences that are too long to be remembered, many that are unintelligible, and many that are unsuitable to be repeated, word for word, to express their own thoughts and wishes.

But their individual imperfections do not impeach the perfection, or the validity of the system of nature which they unconsciously adopt. That system must be judged of by its results in in the aggregate, not by the isolated operations of

individuals, who pick up a language in a course of careless desultory gleaning.

When children undertake to compose a sentence which they have never heard uttered by others, or not often enough to enable them to retain it thoroughly in the memory, they speak with indecision and inaccuracy. But when they utter complete idiomatical sentences with fluency, with accurate pronunciation, and with decision, while they are still incapable of understanding any of the principles according to which they unconsciously combine their words in grammatical form, it is obvious that they must have learned, retained, and reproduced them by dint of imitation and reiteration.

These sentences are the rails on which the trains of thought travel swiftly, smoothly, and without the slightest deviation from their proper course; and each language seems to constitute a separate line of rails, because they do not clash with each other when the little linguists have occasion to converse with two or more foreigners of different nations. The reason of this appears to be that, in the first instance, the words are indissolubly bound together in those sentences which the child learns by rote, that is by imitation, and repetition of the sounds, but not without a definite idea of their combined meaning. By slow and almost imperceptible degrees he

begins to frame variations of the sentences, by interchanging the words or the clauses, and by inserting new words, as humour, or chance, or necessity impel him; but still their first connection with each other is preserved unbroken in the memory by the frequent repetition of the originals.

Each new sentence which he acquires is interchangeable, more or less usefully, with those previously learned by rote; and as it generally contains one or two words already familiar to him, an easy and natural connection springs up among them; they daily become more closely amalgamated with each other in the memory, and at the same time more clearly and thoroughly understood.

In learning to talk he gains the greatest advantage from consorting with other children, because their speech is limited to a very few words, which are constantly reiterated with variations, and he echoes what they say more easily, and adopts their phrases more readily, than the less congenial and less suitable expressions of adults.

Long before their reasoning powers become capable of grappling with grammar, children display fluency, correctness, and copiousness of speech; fluency, because the sentences which they know are so few that the memory is not overloaded, and they can reproduce them with ease; correctness, because their words are linked together in the

memory in the form of idiomatic sentences, learned by rote; and copiousness, because there is in well-selected practical sentences a reproductive energy which disunited words do not possess.

Hereafter we shall observe how it is that the knowledge of many words is not essential, and that fluency, correctness, and copiousness are quite consistent with a very small vocabulary.

Infants learn their own language slowly but surely, for a speechless child is very rarely to be met with; and their progress does not depend upon the intelligence of their parents, for a silly mother who incessantly repeats the same colloquial tales, brings an only child forward in speaking, more quickly than the cleverest woman, who does not recite dialogues, and resort to repetitions.

The infantile method is also perfect, inasmuch as children always learn to speak exactly in accordance with the exemplars around them, however pure, or however corrupt those may be. The best proof of this perfection in their imitative power, is to be found in the fact that there are some languages which have been transmitted, almost without alteration, through many generations.

The memory of children is not so retentive as that of adults, for we know that, if removed, when under four years of age, to a place where they neither speak it nor hear it spoken, they lose every

word of their own language in a few months. On the other hand, if they speak it but for a very few minutes every day, they never forget it. They learn a new language equally well in either case.

Hence it appears that repetition, which we have shown to be the process by which they originally acquire the power of using idiomatic sentences, is also the preserving principle by means of which children retain that power. By transposing and interchanging the words and the clauses, they utilize them all, and thus gradually, but unconsciously, amplify their power of speech. They pronounce to perfection by closely observing and mimicking, or even caricaturing, the pitch of the voice, the tones, the gesticulations, the movements of the head, and the contortions of the face of those around them.

The whole process, therefore, resolves itself into imitation, repetition, and diligent endeavours to give expression to new ideas, by changing the words from one sentence to another.

It is obvious that a very moderate amount of reasoning power is exercised in this process. Infants do not possess an intuitive understanding of any language; nor have they the power of framing idiomatic sentences at once by instinct. Not until they have made many futile attempts, can they utter the simple vowel sounds; not until

many weeks or months have elapsed can they pronounce words; and after that there is a long interval before they can string words together in sentences. And yet the feeble efforts of dawning reason are amply sufficient for the colloquial attainment of the most complicated languages.

Thus far we have traced the progress of infants in beginning to speak their mother tongue. This natural impulse continues in full vigour during childhood and youth. Still guided by the same unerring instinct, a child of six, eight, or ten years of age, when suddenly transplanted to a foreign country, where he consorts chiefly with the natives, immediately adopts the same course of imitation and repetition of practical sentences. As he is alike untrammelled and unaided, the true process of nature is most distinctly and perfectly exemplified by him. In three or four months he generally talks a foreign language as fluently as his own. If he never hears it spoken, except by the natives of the country, he speaks it without any adulteration; but if there are people around him who jumble together the words, or the tones, or the constructions of two languages, he always adopts their jargon. His conversation is compounded of the phraseology of all those with whom he is brought into casual intercourse, for he imitates everything and everybody without discrimination. He never pauses to consider which language he

has to speak, nor does he ever address the wrong language to anyone.

This promptitude, when displayed by adults, is generally regarded as an indication of great cleverness, although every child exhibits it, even in speaking four or five languages.

It is by this clearly traceable course of action that the urchin masters every new language that he hears; and therefore we shall take him for our model, instead of the helpless, dependent infant. Without analyzing or philosophising, and without any of those advantages which science and experience are supposed to confer upon adults, he contrives to speak foreign tongues more idiomatically, and with greater facility than they do. And it is worthy of notice that all languages appear to be equally easy to him, although he has to contend, exactly as we have, against a fixed habit of expressing his thoughts, in a language which is dissimilar, perhaps, in every respect.

Children are considered by some to have an advantage over adults, in consequence of their minds being blank; but ours are blank enough with respect to a language altogether unknown to us, and vacuity of mind is not found to be conducive to success in any other pursuit.

In truth, children labour under several disadvantages, for which, however, nature provides adequate compensation. For instance, they have

less power of concentration, less application, and abstraction, and no idea of method. And although in early life the memory is more sprightly, it is a mistake to suppose that adults cannot equal the actual performances of children, in learning a number of words in any foreign language.

Again, children far excel adults in the true imitation of foreign sounds. That power is due to a flexibility of the vocal organs, which becomes impaired by disuse and neglect. However when the cause is ascertained and the remedy is obvious, the failure may be rectified for the future. We have all been in possession of that power of imitation, and our apparent inferiority, which arises solely from the omission to exercise the organs, is only accidental.

Hereafter this may be easily tested with children placed in positions favourable to their keeping up, uninterruptedly, the practice of speaking new languages. It seems probable that, under such circumstances, their power of imitation would not only be developed to an unparalleled extent, but that it would also last in full force as long as the other faculties of the body and mind remained unimpaired.

But we must bear in mind that the faculty of reproducing sounds has nothing intellectual in it. The power of expressing thought in idiomatic phraseology is the most important matter for

consideration, because this is the essentially intellectual part of the undertaking.

The success of children is due to their following the light of nature. We have ignored that beacon, and have deviated from the right course; but when we obtain the true bearings and soundings, there is nothing to prevent us from resuming it, with every confidence of success.

CHAPTER II.

OUTLINE OF THE SCHEME.

LANGUAGE is a tree which is propagated not by seeds, but by cuttings; not by words, but by sentences.

Every language is an aggregate of sentences, that is, of words combined in certain established forms, grammatical and idiomatic. Unconnected words are not language; and therefore we proscribe them altogether. Sentences have within them a principle of vitality, an inherent power of expressing many different ideas by giving birth to new sentences. Unconnected words have no such power, and therefore it is a misapplication of time and labour to learn them at the outset.

A sentence is a branch with every leaf arranged in the perfect order of nature. A branch may be used for purposes of decoration, or it may be carried as a flag of truce between warring tribes.

But disunited words are of no more use to a learner, than a sack of loose leaves would be to the decorator, or to the herald of peace.

Our taskmasters make us waste weeks and months in exercises which virtually amount to endeavours to manufacture branches of leaves without sticks. For when the coherence of the words, their combined significance, and their order of arrangement have been lost; when the words are bisected and trisected, and their component parts are scattered, we cannot re-arrange them in the original idiomatic order, and it is laborious even to combine them grammatically. Every word, in its turn, gives rise to much deliberation; and the result, after all, is generally a gross caricature, exhibiting the vine leaves of Spain, France, or Italy, grotesquely arranged upon a stick of British oak.

There is no reason why a beginner should not learn complete sentences of ten or twenty words each, in a foreign language, one by one, and employ them as freely and intelligently as if he were speaking his vernacular tongue. And considering that the classical proportions of a sentence are not impaired by the removal of any one word, and the substitution of another grammatically corresponding to it, there is nothing to prevent a beginner from acquiring all the variations which may be producible by interchanging words in strict conformity with the established construction.

But this restrictive course is not followed. It is true that dialogue books are used, but so many sentences are studied at once that the idiomatic combinations escape from the memory, although the individual words may be all retained. Moreover, the study of grammar is generally superadded, and thus the memory is overtasked. The sentences, too, are sometimes very injudiciously selected, and conversations are attempted in which they cannot be introduced without considerable exercise of ingenuity on the one hand, or the employment of unknown words on the other. It is thus that the difficulties of a beginner are seriously increased.

Yet in spite of all the modern improvements in the methods of learning languages, there are many well educated men who still persist in following the ancient system. After striving conscientiously for months to learn a living language from books, they give it up in despair, finding that they make no perceptible progress, even although they hear it constantly spoken around them. This is the natural consequence of following an irrational method. Men study grammar, and learn thereby to interpret the written language, when their object is to acquire the habit of speaking it. They are always engaged in decomposing, instead of composing. They assume that because they can disintegrate, they can also reconstruct sentences; and they

cannot discern that there is anything obstructive in the method which they are pursuing.

Instead of receiving, as children do, the inimitable fabric of speech ready made, they supply themselves with the raw material in profusion, in the vain hope of manufacturing it for themselves, at some future, and perhaps distant period, by means of cumbrous and costly machinery.

Relying on the traditions of their boyhood, they overload the memory with words, without making any attempt to ascertain its capacity for retaining them, and regardless of the necessity for reproducing them in their proper combinations. They flatter themselves that every word which they have seen and heard can be reproduced at pleasure. They learn a number of miscellaneous words very imperfectly, and without scrutiny as to their practical utility; and they delude themselves with the idea that they know them, because with the aid of the dictionary and of the context, they can interpret the sentences in which they stand. They regard the power of recognition as equivalent to the cognition of words. Yet they scoff at a man who pretends to know everybody whom he knows by sight.

Although they seldom attempt to combine words, they are content to ascribe their inability to do so to the absence of the special talent required for that purpose, or else they lay the blame on their

ears. They employ the words, language, grammar, knowing, studying, speaking, talking and learning, in a vague indeterminate manner. They retard their own progress by injudiciously mingling incongruous parts of the process, by putting the first last, and the last first; and they sometimes altogether omit the most essential part.

In defiance of all experience, there are many who still hold that a good scientific acquaintance with a grammar, is practically equivalent to a knowledge of the language to which it relates. Now, any child who associates with foreign children, contrives, unless there be some disturbing causes, to speak their language in a few weeks, and he effects it without learning any grammar; and yet there is no magic in it. By those who have never given a thought to the subject, he is oracularly declared to learn by ear. But he is not merely a passive listener; his power of speech is the result of untiring, vigorous action; that is, of the assiduous exercise of the memory, of the imitative faculty, and of the vocal organs, in recalling and repeating some practical sentences, which, by chance, he has heard others use. His success does not depend either on the quality of his hearing apparatus, or of his understanding, for he invariably succeeds.

The child practises oral composition on a very small scale, but on a progressive plan, extremely

simple and effective, which adults witness every day, though without discerning that it is based on a principle which is the essence of the linguistic art.

When, in opposition to that principle, the achievement of fluently connecting foreign words in appropriate and idiomatic combinations, is presumed to be attainable by grammar and analysis, that is, by means of theory, without practice,—the result always is, and always must be, failure.

Now in order to acquire the colloquial use of a language as expeditiously, as easily, and as effectually as children do, we have to deduce from their desultory, irregular operations, an orderly method, by which time and labour may be strictly economised, and by which definite daily progress may be secured. The leading principle is, to learn a very little at a time; not in a loose, careless way, but perfectly. Some words must be selected to be learned first; and it is essential that their number should be so limited that they can all be reproduced instantaneously, without an effort. They should also be committed to memory, arranged in idiomatic combinations, that is, in ready-made sentences. These ought to be of a strictly practical nature, and they ought to be framed so as to include, in a small compass, all the constructions of the language.

The adult beginner must not attempt to learn more than one sentence at a time.

He must receive the pronunciation of each sentence from a native, echoing it until he can utter the whole combination of sounds intelligibly, and with facility, and he must practise until he can interchange the words of the first two sentences into every possible variation, as freely as if they belonged to his own language. If he will thus "master" each sentence, and if he will examine himself honestly, and without any self-deception, before he begins to learn a new one, his daily progress, whether fast or slow, will be definite.

Let it be clearly understood that the most fatal of all errors is the overloading of the memory.

The beginner must not learn any unconnected words, nor look into a book, until he has gone through a certain course of training. If he does not attend to these restrictions, the memory will become clogged with imperfectly remembered words, and will be unable to effect those rapid movements which are essential to the attainment of perfect fluency.

This is the only certain test, whereby it can be discovered how many words he has "mastered."

The sentences which he commits to memory form the basis of his first oral exercises, and

afterwards they become the models for his future guidance in composing new ones.

By concentrating his attention upon them, instead of exercising it discursively upon a larger range, he acquires an idiomatic command of language on a small scale.

If properly selected, a few sentences will afford him an incredible variety of expression, and he will not fail to speak grammatically, because, if he complies with the stipulations and restrictions, he cannot deviate from the true constructions except through gross inattention to the models.

In selecting what he is to commit to memory, he must subject each sentence and each word to the standard of practical utility, discarding all words which are not used every day, and substituting those which are more frequently employed; for if useless words be enlisted, they occupy time, and attention, and a place in his memory, which cannot be spared without detriment to his progress.

They who make a levy of words in mass, and expect to find their raw recruits as useful as disciplined soldiers, invariably discover, when they take the field, that the greater their number, the more unmanageable they are; and that when an attempt is made to manœuvre them, the result is a miserable state of confusion.

On the other hand, a highly disciplined phalanx of two or three hundred useful words, arranged in well-chosen sentences, comprising every construction of the language, and under the perfect control of a faithful memory, will be of far greater service to a traveller, than two or three thousand words, untrained to active co-operation.

CHAPTER III.

MEMORY.

THE source of all our blundering over foreign languages is the mistaken notion that the attainment of the colloquial power depends more upon reasoning processes, than upon efforts of the memory. That pursuit cannot be a very intellectual one, in which people of the humblest capacity succeed.

Children learn their first sentences without reasoning about the words. They know what meaning the whole sentence conveys, but they do not understand each particular word, nor do they know one part of speech from another.

They repeat some sounds which they have heard others employing with success; and whenever that repetition is a true imitation, the result is an idiomatic sentence.

The memory is generally regarded as a

repertory, in which all new ideas are sorted and arranged, in an orderly manner, amongst our previous experiences, so that they shall always be forthcoming when wanted. Such is the theory, but the practice very seldom corresponds to it; and yet we find in some people a strong conviction that everything received is permanently, though indistinctly retained. Hence the practice of attempting to learn, in one sitting, a number of foreign words, with their strange sounds and their multiform variations, far in excess of the power of the memory. These, however, demand for their retention and reproduction, a tenacity and a vivacity which stand in strong contrast with the lethargy of the overcrammed memory. The mode of action of this faculty, in the acquisition of languages, is peculiar, and it deserves consideration. The duration of any impression made upon the memory is uncertain, varying in proportion to the interest excited within us; to the attention that we bestow; to the time that it remains in undisturbed predominance; or to the frequency of its renewal.

Our power of recollecting sentiments or incidents is intellectual, because we interweave them amongst our experiences, and then we are able, by the association of ideas, to retrace, recall, and contemplate them. In this manner anything, though not everything, may be retained.

But foreign words, being merely strange sounds, without any natural or obvious significance, cannot be retraced and recalled by efforts of the intellect, because they are not associated in the memory with any of our feelings, habits, or ideas, and we cannot reproduce them by conjuring up other times, scenes, persons, or events. The impressions we receive from them are not durable, and they can only be made so by being frequently renewed.

The difficulty of accurately reproducing them is proportionate to the number of sounds, that is, of syllables, which we attempt to learn at one effort. In this respect, the retentive power of the memory, so far from being unlimited, is feeble in the extreme. The mere utterance of a sentence of a dozen syllables, of a strange language, when heard for the first time, is difficult; but the retention thereof demands a succession of efforts of the memory, and of the imitative power.

Unintermitting repetition of a few sounds will undoubtedly preserve them in the memory, and children resort to this expedient, as if apprehensive that they are never to hear the same combination again. Adults may follow the same plan; but such drudgery is unnecessary, because we may cause the sounds to be repeated to us for our imitation, at intervals, as often as we please, and thus learn them with little trouble and no fatigue to the memory. Whatever course we pursue, the sounds

of strange words, as soon as the attention is withdrawn from them, begin to evaporate from the memory, like raindrops exposed to the action of the sun and wind; and as every minute that passes, without an attempt to renew them, shortens the period of their duration, and renders them less and less perfect, it is worse than useless to tax the memory to recall them, thus deteriorated by the action of time, and the intrusion of other impressions. It is far better to have a native always at command during the first few days, to utter them afresh for our imitation, at intervals snatched from other pursuits. Supposing a certain uniform degree of attention to be given, the more frequently we practise such repetitions at short intervals, and the more carefully we imitate the sounds, the more lasting and the more accurate will be the impressions produced on the memory.

This is the true course; and it is impossible to learn the sounds of foreign words to perfection on any other principle. Each sentence ought to be thus practised until by mimicry we can echo the sounds with success. Repetition trains the vocal organs to utter them with ease, while it also fixes them in the memory, so that by degrees we can pronounce them accurately without the native's aid.

The lapse of three hours devoted to other occupations will often undo a morning's work

to a serious extent, and a pause of six hours will obliterate some of the sounds from the memory altogether. On this account the intervals between the repetitions ought to be brief. But during the hours of sleep, when the faculties are in a state of repose, we lose nothing; because the latest impressions remain undisturbed, the action of other thoughts is suspended, and the flight of time seems to be arrested. For if we charge the memory shortly before we fall asleep, and revert to the task as soon as we awake, the impressions are as fresh, after eight hours' rest, as if only half an hour had elapsed since the words were learned by heart. But in dreams the memory is often very busy, and therefore it is only in deep, dreamless sleep that the activity of the brain is totally suspended.

Thus far in respect to words, regarded as mere sounds. We have now to deal with them as representative signs, and to consider how we may best contrive to establish so complete an amalgamation of the sound with the thing signified, that the words will come spontaneously to the lips when we want to give utterance to the ideas which they convey. Here, again, let us observe the course of nature, indicated in the restrictive and reiterative method adopted by children. They maintain their acquisitions by repeating, at short intervals, all the sentences they have learned; and they gradually

enlarge their narrow sphere of conversation by interchanges and transpositions of words.

It is not by reasoning, nor by deliberation that they compose idiomatic sentences.

They do not translate. In their commerce with foreigners they do not barter word for word. They do not export a form of speech, an idea clothed in language, to be exchanged for one exactly corresponding to it; but they import an idiomatic combination of words, together with the idea belonging to it; they immediately begin to employ it for practical purposes without alteration; and they repeat it so often that it becomes stereotyped in the memory.

The words of a foreign tongue which we commit to memory are prisoners of war, incessantly trying to escape, and it requires great vigilance to detain them; for unless our attention be continually directed towards them, and unless we muster them frequently, they steal away into the forest, and disperse. But when they are bound together in sentences, the same degree of watchfulness is not required, because they escape with difficulty, and a whole gang of them may easily be traced and recaptured at once.

When a word has escaped from the memory we often find that no intellectual exertion can recal it. But the lost word, when not wanted, will sometimes return unbidden, without any assignable

cause, or any traceable connection of thought. Our inability to command the use of it in the moment of need, arises solely from the want of habituation.

The more we familiarize ourselves with a newly acquired word or phrase, by frequently employing it in conjunction with others, the sooner and the more intimately will it become amalgamated with the stock in our possession, and the more certainly will it recur to us, when required for use.

The fact is, that any word, however insignificant, with which it has ever been used in juxtaposition, may recal the wanderer, either by an accidental association of ideas, or by a faint recollection—an echo, as it were, of the rhythm of the original expression.

Again, the greater the number of words we learn imperfectly before we begin to compose—that is, to speak—the greater will be our difficulty in using them in conjunction with new ones.

On the other hand, the smaller the stock of words we learn, the greater will be our facility in using them, and in amalgamating new ones with them.

As everything that we do, unless we perform it with inattention or reluctance, becomes by repetition, a habit, we must accustom ourselves to make active use of each sentence, and of each word,

committed to memory, instead of following the passive methods generally prevailing. The majority of men who have studied Greek for six or eight years are unable to employ the commonest words colloquially. The passive inert reception of a large number of words through the eyes and ears, though recalled thousands of times with intelligence and attention, is manifestly of little practical value for colloquial purposes, because it does not fix them in the memory in such a manner as to render them readily available in oral composition.

Mere repetition, therefore, is unavailing; and however perfectly we may know words by sight, such knowledge is not practical.

No doubt the memory is refreshed by every look at the book, and the next effort to recall the words, if made very soon afterwards, will be facilitated thereby. But every instance in which we actually make use of a word, or of a phrase, in the daily practice of oral composition, produces an impression on the memory far more efficacious and enduring, than that which results from recognizing it in a book, from seeking for it cursorily in a dictionary, from writing it down, from hearing others use it, or from all of these combined.

To their non-observance of this principle, we ascribe the failures which occur among men of

education, and even among those who have a taste for this pursuit. To their assiduous attention to it, we trace the universal success of children. To their partial adoption thereof we attribute the success of couriers, of missionaries, and of other travellers dealing with unwritten languages, but especially of those who, under some pressure of circumstances, have limited themselves to the acquisition, and to the daily employment of a few colloquial sentences for some one definite purpose.

These learn a very few words, but they learn them practically and perfectly. But the number of words which hard-reading men learn, unpractically and imperfectly, is so great that the memory is evidently a sieve through which unconnected words escape, while it retains those that cohere in sentences learned by rote.

But words may be said to have a threefold nature; for, in the minds of educated men, the sound and the meaning are inseparably connected with the symbols that represent them to the eye. But this ideal inseparability is a source of infinite difficulty and confusion, from which the uneducated are exempt. Hence it happens that many servants, who do not attempt to read or write, excel their masters in picking up continental languages during a short tour.

In the learning of languages, phonetically

written, less mischief arises, because the beginner is not much misled by the spelling; but in English we find one of the commonest sounds variously symbolized by a, e, i, o, u, y, eo, oe, oi, io, re, ou, ea, oo, and gh; as in the words aroma, verse, bird, dove, murmur, myrrh, dungeon, does, porpoise, nation, acre, courage, earth, blood, and Edinburgh. But this is only one out of many stumbling blocks; for more than half of our consonants may be found standing mute, and many of them do duty for their neighbours. The letter A is employed in nine different ways, as in aroma, far, war, was, hat, hate, many, quay, beauty; and the syllable *ough* has eight different sounds, each of which is represented in other words by different combinations. The brightest intellects have been thrown into confusion by beginning English at the wrong end; and yet, when learned in the right way, it is the easiest language in Europe. So fantastic is that system which we complacently call orthography, that no one can determine the pronunciation of a new word of two syllables. The foreigner who learns English, has to contend with difficulties not to be surpassed even in the study of Chinese; for the symbols used in the Celestial Empire may confound, but they do not mislead him. He perseveres, however, because he imagines that he is exercising his reasoning powers beneficially; but here is another delusion, for in reality he is

only mystifying himself by making strenuous efforts to deduce a number of sounds, in defiance of all logic, from anomalous and inconsistent spellings, irreconcileable with any fixed principles. The sounds elude his grasp like pickpockets, who go about begging in the disguise of cripples, and run away, leaving their rags in the hands of those who try to apprehend them.

It is difficult enough to learn a short sentence every day, and to fix the meaning of each word, the principle of the constructions, and the order of the words, in the memory, so that we can employ them all as perfectly as if they belonged to our own tongue. But the difficulty is greatly increased by undertaking at the same time to learn a set of strange symbols, or to train ourselves to employ familiar letters in an unusual manner. The latter suggest to the mind other sounds and other meanings, which ought not to be remembered. But we have not that control over the memory which enables us to dismiss anything from it at will. Much less can we discard things of which we are constantly reminded by seeing them before our eyes. When the spelling of a word suggests a variety of different sounds, uncertainty ensues, and a difficulty is gratuitously created which may be avoided by merely learning the sound, unwritten.

When we have to attach new sounds to familiar

letters we become involved in a harassing struggle against habits formed in early life. While the memory is being exerted to the utmost of its power, or, as usually happens, strained far beyond its power, in learning new sounds and new combinations of words, that unnecessary and irrational conflict ought to be avoided. This caution relates especially to those who are learning English or French. On the same principle, English and French people, having been trained to a very eccentric orthography, should never look into a foreign book, printed in the Roman character, until they have gained some facility in speaking the new language with an intelligible pronunciation.

Beginners ought to abjure the notion that words are mere combinations of certain letters, to which they owe their origin, and that reading is the first step to be taken. Letters are not the elements of language, but the rudiments of the art of writing, with which millions of our fellow men in all parts of the world are still unacquainted.

The Chinese may be forgiven for regarding their written symbols as the elements of language. Instead of employing alphabetic letters, their forefathers had recourse to hieroglyphics. These indicated the thing signified, and thus they suggested the sound; but in course of time the symbols have gradually become corrupted and

disguised, to such an extent that they now bear no resemblance to the objects which they at first pictorially represented. Nevertheless custom and long prescription justify their retention, because the language is now divided into many dialects, and each written symbol is universally understood, although it has a different name in each province. Thus, although they do not understand one another's speech, they can all communicate with each other in writing. They are justly proud of this bond of union, extending through a vast empire, and they regard their written characters with the deepest veneration, as the source from which words sprung.

But our alphabetical system, in spite of all its anomalies and gross inconsistencies, is regarded with almost equal veneration. By a fiction it is held to represent sounds correctly and logically; whereas in reality the antagonism subsisting between the established pronunciation of many words and the sounds suggested by the spelling is so strong, and it so completely bewilders and misleads a beginner, that reading and spelling must be discarded altogether at the outset. The memory does not require the aid of the eyes, because we stipulate that it shall never be overloaded. Children learn the pronunciation of a foreign tongue quite perfectly without any artificial assistance from letters, and it seems extraordinary

that educated men should accept the delusive aid of such rotten crutches, and that teachers should encourage them in so doing.

The more words we attempt to commit to memory in any given time, the fewer do we retain; because each word with which we encumber the memory beyond its strength, obstructs its freedom of action to the same crushing extent that an additional stone on the back of a race-horse detracts from his speed. It would be a great achievement to acquire, in thirty days, three hundred words of a language altogether strange and unknown, and to carry them at the racing pace with which we use those of our own tongue. We have to naturalize every individual word, so that we can employ it with perfect freedom, and without any deliberation. This degree of efficiency is not attainable, except by diligent practice. A child spends the livelong day in reiterating the same little sentences, with such variations as he can adopt from the casual conversations going on around him. He acts upon impulse, and in utter ignorance of the rationale of the system which nature prompts him thus industriously to pursue. Adults may attain in a week, as much as he learns in a month; because while we adopt the principle, we systematize the process; we discard all that is not essential; we avoid all that is obstructive; we bring mature faculties to bear upon it; and, without sacrificing

its simplicity, we diversify it by multiplying variations, as with a kaleidoscope.

A vague, erroneous impression prevails that much depends upon time, and that it is necessary to hold intercourse for weeks or months with foreigners, in order to acquire the power of speaking their language. Time, however, is not an ally; but an enemy always on the alert to plunder us of our acquisitions. If we work for one hour in every twenty-four, he obtains an advantage over us in the ratio of twenty-three to one. It is folly and presumption to give such odds even to the most contemptible foe. In order to hold our own against our indefatigable enemy, we must encounter him on more equal terms. In this contest the better part of discretion is valour, and the only effectual strategy is to carry the war into the hostile territory; to set our whole forces in motion every two or three hours; and never to let a straggler fall into the enemy's hands, without an immediate rush to the rescue.

But it is not from time, nor from books, nor from teachers, but from the frequency and earnestness of our own personal efforts to naturalize useful sentences, that our success in oral composition proceeds. In the selection of those sentences, judgment must be exercised; but when they are once chosen, we have only to commit them to

memory, and to obtain fluency in using all the variations. No one can do this for us, nor even aid us in doing it. We must be self-taught, except as to pronunciation.

That thorough practical knowledge of a small stock of well-chosen sentences, which exhibits itself by fluency in using them, ought to be acquired before we mingle with those who speak the language.

Some people go abroad, and live in a foreign family, without knowing ten words of the language, trusting to reading, to grammar, to time, to ear, to nature, to necessity, to guess-work, and to chance to teach them; and with all these teachers they break down.

Instead of consorting with children, who keep up an incessant chatter with one or two hundred words, arranged in idiomatic sentences of different constructions, and strictly practical, they betake themselves to grammar and analysis, and associate with educated adults, who carefully avoid repetitions, and who speak the whole language.

They are advised to go abroad and practise talking, because "practice makes perfect," and "use is everything." But they receive no definite, specific instructions. They do not know what to practise, and they are puzzled how to practise that which they cannot do at all.

The necessity for acquiring something definite

and useful, every day, is ignored. Talking implies understanding what is spoken; but this essential qualification is totally wanting, and therefore it seems natural and necessary at first to sit and listen.

Thus situated, the beginner has firstly to divine, from the looks and gestures of two foreigners, what subject they are talking about; then to make crude conjectures as to the purport of some one sentence; then to retrace the airy path through which the winged words have flown, in order to recapture the lost sounds; then to allot by guess-work two or three sounds to each word; then to assign at a venture a meaning to each word; and finally to treasure them up, right or wrong, in the memory, while new sounds are still falling in rapid succession on his ear, and distracting his attention.

As reasonably might a photographer, regardless of intervening objects, attempt to take the likenesses of individuals walking along a crowded street.

On the other hand, those who learn useful sentences by heart, and who seize every possible opportunity of employing them, are invariably successful.

In fact there is no method however obstructive or irrational, that will not be rectified and vivified, at any stage, by the practice of oral composition, on the basis of a few well chosen sentences.

But as this is a perfect process, all-sufficient

of itself, and comprehensive enough to exercise the finest memory to the utmost of its power, we protest against all attempts to dilute it, by combining it in the first stage with grammar, or with any book-system, because all such methods are antagonistic to it. They overload the memory, and confuse the intellect; and are therefore subversive of that principle which recommends itself to us by its extreme simplicity, and by its never-failing success among children.

As the power of the memory in retaining new words is very limited, reason requires that we should select the primary sentences in such a manner, that they shall be capable of representing the greatest possible number of ideas, and that we should know the precise extent of the latent power of expression which they possess, and definitely ascertain and master all the different forms in which they may be arranged, before we encumber the memory with more words.

Thus alone can we guard against the usual deplorable waste of time and labour.

Children learn very few words at first; but they acquire, by assiduous practice, the art, which is nothing more than the habit, of using them with fluency.

Every new word has to be worked into those practical sentences which they have learned by rote; and by the time they can interweave thirty or

forty words, the chief difficulty of speaking is overcome. Thus, when the adult student has acquired this fluency with a few practical sentences, he is relieved from the necessity of deliberating as to the order in which the words are to be arranged; his memory becomes capable of receiving and retaining, without confusion, more words than it could compass at first; and he obtains abundant compensation for the apparently insignificant progress which he made, when restricted to learning a very little every day.

If a beginner thinks himself too clever to master less than thirty or forty foreign words every day, he will find the first experiment as galling and exhausting as the Rarey process is to an obstreperous horse, when he is struggling against his own weight and strength. The longer he recalcitrates, the more thoroughly will he be convinced of the injustice done to the memory by overburdening it, and of the wisdom of hobbling it, and circumscribing its freedom, so as to ascertain its power, or rather to prove its weakness at once. However quick and retentive the memory may be, it cannot work beyond its strength. This is a truism, but in the acquisition of languages, it seems to be absolutely ignored.

It is a mere schoolboy notion to try how many words can be "got by heart" in a limited time, irrespectively of that perfect practical

retention of them, without which the labour is in vain.

Most people complain of the treachery or weakness of the memory, but no one can know the extent of its incapacity until it has been formally tested.

The knowledge of a given number of words, is the power of using every one of them, with promptitude and fluency, in a variety of idiomatic combinations.

Fluency in a foreign tongue is generally attributed to cleverness in adults, but in children it is nothing more than exactitude in repeating, interchanging, and transposing the phrases and words which they have learned by rote.

If we learn in the first instance nothing but complete sentences, the power of recollecting and reproducing them is obviously a mere exertion of the memory, and it requires no greater range of intellect than that which a little child possesses, to interchange the words.

But to reproduce sentences verbatim, is to speak idiomatically; and therefore the genuine colloquial knowledge of a language is attained by repeated efforts of the memory, not by vigorous exertions of the reasoning faculties.

CHAPTER IV.

EVOLUTIONS OF LANGUAGE.

THE next question for consideration is how that copiousness of speech which children exhibit, can be consistent with a very small vocabulary; how it takes its rise; and how we may extract, from a few words, the greatest possible results, and obtain them with the smallest possible effort.

When, after a few weeks' residence abroad, a child, ten years old, pours forth without deliberation, hesitation, or effort, hundreds of sentences, many of which are purely idiomatical, we know that it is not to superior intelligence, nor to a thorough knowledge of the principles of grammar, that he is indebted for his success. So great is his command over the four or five scores of words which he has treasured up, that they seem to have a

mysterious power of resolving themselves into idiomatic combinations. It is evident that some powerful agency is at work. It would be idle to contend that such combinations result from words learned incoherently; for all experience runs counter to that conjecture. We therefore trace their parentage without hesitation to those ready-made sentences which children first acquire. And we find that it is not from any special aptitude, either in the child, or in the successful linguist, that their "mastery" of speech originates: but that there is a property of growth and expansion in language itself, whenever it is rightly received, and fairly treated.

For when sentences are harmoniously combined, they have a reproductive power, whereby they yield an astonishing number of variations, obtained by interchanges of the words. And this increase is in geometrical progression, the result being in proportion to the length of the sentences; that is, to the number of interchangeable words which they contain. The only condition to be observed in framing the sentences, is that there shall be so much congruity between the individual words in each column, that they may be changed from one sentence to another without prejudice either to the sense, or to the grammatical construction.

For in any two sentences prepared according to these stipulations, and on the following plan:

A	C	E	G	I	K	M	O	Q	S	U	W	Y
B	D	F	H	J	L	N	P	R	T	V	X	Z

any four words, K, L, M, N, will yield four combinations: as, KM, KN, LM, LN; and any two others, as I and J, added to them, will double the number of combinations, thus, IKM, IKN, ILM, ILN; JKM, JKN, JLM, JLN. So any two other congruous words, whether prefixed or affixed, or inserted in the middle of any sentence, will double the number.

To be still more explicit, two clauses are annexed which comprise $2\times2\times2\times2$ or 16 combinations, each of which contains four words:

I	K	M	O
My	brother	came	in
J	L	N	P
His	servant	went	out

IKMO	IKNO	IKMP	IKNP
JKMO	JKNO	JKMP	JKNP
ILMO	ILNO	ILMP	ILNP
JLMO	JLNO	JLMP	JLNP

By this arrangement of the letters, the alphabetical is made to represent the idiomatic sequence, which is thus preserved inviolate throughout all the variations.

The annexed table shows the scale of progression:

4	words	give	4	combinations of	2 words each.
6	„		8	„	3 „
8	„		16	„	4 „
10	„		32	„	5 „
12	„		64	„	6 „
14	„		128	„	7 „
16	„		256	„	8 „
18	„		512	„	9 „
20	„		1024	„	10 „
40	„	1,024,000		„	20 „

When three sentences of ten words each are constructed on the same principle, the combinations amount to 59,049, that is 3^{10}.

Now two such sentences give 1,024, or 2^{10}.

Therefore the number of sentences being N, and that of the words in each sentence being x, the direct variations produced by interchanging the words of each column, without transposing any of them, will be N^x.

As the basis, we take each word as a unit, exactly in that form in which we find it standing in the original sentence.

It is obvious that a great number of words may be put into one column; but that arrangement would be equivalent to the wretched system of learning lists of nouns, verbs, &c., and it is only mentioned in this place to be reprobated.

When twelve words are irregularly placed in

three columns, containing three, four, and five of them respectively, the results are $3\times4\times5$, or 60 combinations of three words each.

But when they are arranged in two sentences of equal length, the results are 64 combinations of six words each.

When there is a blank in any column, or when the same word recurs, there can be no increase. But there is harmony in clauses as well as in words; and therefore, no practically useful form of speech need be rejected.

The results above exhibited may be greatly increased by transposing the words; because the same law of progression applies to the indirect variations thus produced.

Another addition accrues from those words which have more than one meaning, because they contribute to the formation of additional sentences in another language.

The endless variety of combinations derivable from a few words, has often been noticed; but the fecundity of sentences, and the law by which the evolutions are regulated, seem to have escaped attention. The principle is essentially practical, because every common useful sentence, which is constructed according to the genius of the language to which it belongs, may be matched with another, partially, if not wholly corresponding to it. It is evident that by a strict adoption of this arrangement

of words, with its limitations in consideration of the weakness of the memory, the beginner may regulate his progress with a degree of precision approaching to mathematical certainty. But coupled sentences are not to be considered essential, nor need they extend beyond ten words in length.

When sentences, carefully adjusted to each other, have been "mastered," there arises an attraction of cohesion which binds all the words compactly together, and which prevents any confusion of tongues, by producing a feeling of repugnance to the introduction of any alien word. This safeguard is unattainable by those who are learning the words of two languages at once, in the old incoherent fashion, instead of "mastering" them in their proper combinations.

In showing that well-chosen sentences yield results proportionate to their length, we detect a weak point in most of the prevailing methods of learning languages. One reason for the numerous failures, the slow progress, and the generally small success which attends the first efforts of those who attempt to speak a language, is the practice of beginning with very short sentences, not harmonizing with each other; not strictly practical; not containing all the parts of speech; and, above all, not "mastered."

There is an impression that logical and

mathematical propriety requires that we should proceed gradually from short to long sentences. But this is a delusion, inasmuch as the reasoning powers are not called into action, and the memory can deal with thirty words, in three sentences, as easily as when they are cut down into ten. But in the former arrangement the direct variations alone are 3^{10}, or 59,049 sentences of ten words each, whereas in the latter the results cannot exceed 10^3, or 1,000 sentences, having only three words each. In practice the latter can be of little value, because they are incapable of extension into longer sentences; whereas the longer include thousands of shorter ones, besides the direct variations enumerated.

We have spoken of each word as a unit; but in truth some are twofold, and some threefold. In the words *vocas*, *rogat*, *pugnant*, each of the distinctive personal terminations retains its individuality as a word, and by transferring them from one root to the others we obtain nine combinations. So, *vocabit* and *rogavimus* contain three words each, which form eight combinations when they are interchanged: thus, *vocabit*, *vocabimus*, *vocavit*, *vocavimus*; *rogabit*, *rogabimus*, *rogavit*, *rogavimus*.

With these facts before him, the beginner must determine how many words he will "master" at each effort; and he must restrict himself to that

number, because it is by seeing and hearing additional words that the memory becomes clogged; and because the estimates generally formed of the power of that faculty are erroneous in the extreme.

The bewilderment experienced by men of the clearest intellect, after two or three weeks' study of grammar, may be easily accounted for by the application of this principle of evolution. If columns were opened for sentences comprising the most useful tenses of six verbs, together with all the pronouns and articles, and half-a-dozen prepositions and nouns of any inflected language, the accumulation of figures representing the result of the combinations would be appalling. With this burden on his back, and with his limbs bound with the cords of hard rules, relentlessly knotted with exceptions and qualifications, the only wonder is that a beginner can stagger through his work at all.

But the stronger the memory, the greater is the confidence, the greater is the burden undertaken, and the greater is the bewilderment produced by learning unconnected words. Thus it is that some of the most complete failures have occurred amongst the cleverest people. But the same obfuscation will be produced by attempting to learn too much, in whatever form it may be undertaken. Therefore, while avoiding short sentences,

the beginner must pay due regard to the expansive power of those which are selected to be learned first. And, if he is not too proud to learn the pronunciation of a sentence before he begins to use it, let him restrain his ambition, let him tread in the little footprints of children, and let him "master" the first few sentences without any thought of competing either with time, or with other people.

It is only by chance that children learn those expansive combinations which suddenly amplify their power of speech. They do not search for them, nor do they manufacture them; but when they learn them by accident, the evolutions become possible, and they are gradually brought into use without any discernment of the principle on which they expand.

Children learn to talk, not by laborious conversational efforts for an hour at a time, three times a week; nor by scientific analysis, and careful study of elegant authors for six or eight hours a day; but by never allowing half an hour to pass by, without repeating, interchanging, and transposing the whole stock of idiomatic sentences which they have learned by heart. It is thus that they "master" all the combinations *seriatim*. It is thus that the mind becomes first imbued, and then saturated with the foreign idiom.

The "mastery" of a few words must be, in every instance, the precursor to the more extensive colloquial power. Here is the vestibule through which all must pass, whether their preliminary operations have included a score, a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand words.

So far as self-instruction in foreign tongues is possible, this method will strongly recommend itself to those who have acquired the pronunciation in childhood; to those who are altogether indifferent to it, and to those who can accept the two simple propositions, that it is easier to attain fluency and idiomatic accuracy with a few words than with a great number; and that it is only by practice that fluency can be gained.

The computation given above relates avowedly to an artificial adaptation of sentences one to another, with a view to exhibiting the nature of that great command of words which children insensibly obtain, while expressing their thoughts in foreign forms of speech. But there is no necessity for beginners to deviate from the natural course of learning single sentences, provided that they secure to themselves the advantage which inevitably follows from "mastering" practical combinations, each containing about twenty words. The subdivisions, or minor combinations of long sentences, will be numerous enough to afford abundant exercise for the memory, and therefore

the samples, which have been thrown together for selection for ordinary use, have no special relation to each other; and the order in which they are placed may be reversed or altered at pleasure.

A few coupled sentences, however, have also been provided for those who are curious to ascertain how many words they can "master" in two days. Such experiments ought to be conducted in a series, in the ascending ratio; for the descending scale would be mere self-stultification. Three or four efforts in each day, to "master" four words at a time, at regularly divided intervals, would settle the question very expeditiously; but an entirely strange language must be taken up, and perfect fluency must be made the criterion of success on each occasion. When the conditions are faithfully observed, the distaste which is so generally felt for this pursuit will be counteracted, and the foreign forms of expression, complicated and unnatural as they may appear at first sight, will haunt the memory even in the midst of the most congenial occupations.

As the whole system is founded upon the detection of a speciality in the child's mode of procedure, which has been hitherto unnoticed, and as it is impossible to pass an impartial judgment upon it without some personal experience of the nature of the operation of "mastering" foreign words, the candid

critic is entreated to qualify himself by making one experiment with twelve or fourteen words, *all at once*, before he condemns it. He should learn a couple of sentences of some language quite unknown to him, and having no resemblance to any of those with which he may be acquainted. If the attention be then exclusively devoted for three hours to some other pursuit, the difficulty of rapidly reproducing the variations of the sentences will be acknowledged. But let the experiment be continued until *perfect fluency* has been attained, and then it will be admitted that the memory is severely tasked in trying to "master" a few words with their manifold variations all at one effort.

If, in addition to this, he desires to make the same experiment upon others, two or three victims should be selected, and they should be kept in ignorance as to the object in view. It is not altogether needless to remark that experiments made by persons who have adopted decided opinions regarding the scheme cannot possibly yield any instructive results, because the operations of the memory are influenced to a great extent by alacrity on the one hand, and repugnance on the other.

The experimentalists need not learn either the true pronunciation, or the hieroglyphics, or the orthography, but it must not be forgotten that those difficulties would have to be

COUPLED SENTENCES

Wherewith to Test the Retentive Power of the Memory in "Mastering" or Instantaneously Reproducing the Interchanged Words of some Language quite unknown to the Learner.

1 2 3 4 5 6
A Fy mlant aforchogasant ynfuan arhyd yffordd.

1 2 3 4 5 6
A My children rode rapidly along the road.

1 2 3 4 5 6
B Ei gweinon agodiasant ynaraf ardraws yeae.

1 2 3 4 5 6
B Her servants walked slowly across the field.

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
C Do scargad na blata an mo ngardad.

3 4 5 6 7 1-2
C The flowers in my garden died.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
D Nir crionad moran lilige re se macaire.

3 4 2 1 5 6 7
D Some lilies withered not near the field.

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
E Atani bassa ku na pettelu yenduku pumpinawu.

6 .....7..... 4 5 3 1 2
E Why did you send my boxes to his house?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
F Mi ara lonunchi a wuttaralu yeppudu techinadu.

6 .....7..... 4 5 3 1 2
F When did he bring those letters from your room?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
G Uska bara bhai jahaz par khelta hai.

1 2 3 7 6 5 4
G His big brother is playing on shipboard.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
H Mera chota beta gari men sota tha.

1 2 3 7 6 5 4
H My little son was sleeping in the cart.

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I Nir criognugadar na dleaedoiride moran maiteasa mora.

3 4 1-2 5 7 6
I The statesmen accomplished few great results.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
J Do gnoduigadar na caitreacuib iomad tarba oirdearca.

3 4 1-2 5 7 6
J The citizens attained many important advantages.

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
K Ng do ahko iao tao sianggying difong kyi tso sangi.

1 2 3 4 8 5 6 7 9 10
K Your eldest brother wishes to go to a near place to do business.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
L Ngo siao ahpang we dzong yunyun zingli læ zing sangweh.

1 2 3 4 8 5 6 7 9 10
L My youngest uncle will come from a distant city to seek work.

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
M Anken rawkav awb ekaw ly bite aynu.

1 4 3 2 5 7 6
M But your father rode to our house.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
N Vy hawlak abed o my kaphar awm.

1 4 3 2 5 7 6
N And his servant went from their village.

superadded if they desired to acquire the language in earnest.

Every Englishman's feeling leads him to prefer the traditional policy of obtaining a potential command over a language, by means of grammar and analysis; and he instinctively shrinks from subjecting his attainments to that rigorous test of fluency which may reduce the results of three months' hard study to an unpleasantly small compass; perhaps to *nil.* But there is a great difference between the potential command, and that real, actual "mastery" of words which is only to be obtained by practising oral composition. When he first puts his memory to the proof by a series of experiments, the results will not be flattering. But they must not be discredited on that account.

There are not many men who have learned at the rate of four Latin, or two Greek words every day; and there are very few who have "mastered" one tenth part of that number. But as oral composition is generally excluded from our schools, lest perhaps we should corrupt one another's classical taste, it is no reproach to us. The fact, however, is important, as indicating that the "mastering" of words, and the gauging of the memory by the exercise of oral composition, have not been brought systematically under the observation of those, who, from their position, are

regarded as the highest authorities on the subject of education.

Considering that the memory is the engine principally employed, it is very singular that we have no data for determining, even approximately, its power of "mastering" foreign words. The maximum performances of gifted men have been recorded, but they only tend to foster the prevailing delusion of immensely overrating its power of retention, and of assuming that its range is co-extensive with that of the understanding.

People who go abroad to learn French or German, on the most approved principles, studying with the best masters, and living with a foreign family, seldom express themselves with facility in less than three months. At that stage, the stock of words which they actually employ is generally about three hundred; although they may recognize six, eight, or ten times that number, when they meet with them in books. But such persons often appear to be speechless during the first six weeks, being incapable of disentangling a few useful sentences from that confused mass of words, of which they have only indistinct recollections, as of things seen or heard long ago. It appears then, that during the first three months, they attain, with difficulty, an imperfect knowledge of less than four words a day.

It is very clear that they make a false start;

that their energies are misdirected; and that they encumber themselves by attempting too much at first. When suddenly called upon to converse, at the end of six weeks of hard study, they pump up their words, one by one, with slow and convulsive efforts; not with that readiness which results from knowing a few sentences perfectly, which sometimes awakens a feeling, as of the sudden development of a new sense, and affords a most effectual stimulus to further exertions.

As children, ten years old, generally pick up about three or four foreign words a day, which they wield far better than the students aforesaid, let no man attempt more, if he believes that children have a natural superiority over adults. And let those who dissent from that opinion, but have not put it to the proof, proceed cautiously at first, lest in practice they disable their own judgment; and lest they become bewildered before they have "mastered" fifty words.

Nothing is more to be deprecated than the impetuosity with which a youth plunges into the intricacies of a foreign language, relying, with unbounded confidence, on his power of learning by dint of laborious and protracted study. If strength of intellect were required, he would be in the right; but when the high-bred horse is employed on an emergency to draw a load of hay, he is not expected to gallop, but to take a few slow steps at

a time, and to wait patiently, while his load is being gradually heaped up, and adjusted. If he does go off at a gallop, he must of necessity exert his strength in a most disadvantageous manner.

The computations given above seem to prove that all those who have contrived in a short time to speak a foreign tongue idiomatically, without books or study, must have succeeded in proportion to their fortuitous approximation to the practice of learning ready-made sentences of proper length.

The great Cardinal himself must have trodden in this path, but he did so unwittingly, for if he had discerned the principle, he would easily have eclipsed all his recorded achievements. We are told that he learned sentences and phrases by heart; and that the same words were very frequently repeated in his conversations with foreigners. But he did not restrict himself to sentences; he overcharged his fine memory with unconnected words, which were not carefully selected, but were in many instances taken at hazard; he did not know how to lay his trains of words with certainty; nor did he discover the electric spark wherewith to fire them at will.

It is a common remark that illiterate people employ only three or four hundred words. This assertion, though not authenticated, passes

unchallenged; and yet people go on cramming themselves with words, as if the volubility, occasionally observed among the peasantry, would not suffice for a beginner; or as if it were impossible to learn too many words at once; or as if the *copia verborum* would necessarily lead to the *copia fandi.*

The poverty of the language of children and illiterate people, is often spoken of with contempt; and the paucity of their words is ignorantly supposed to indicate the paucity of their ideas. But Euclid is never spoken of as a man of few words, or of few ideas, and yet he contrived to write his first six books with less than four hundred words.

If the most exact of all the sciences can be luminously expounded with so small a stock of words, and if people of great intelligence, among the lower orders, can communicate all their ideas, on the multifarious transactions of a busy life, with a similar number, we scarcely require to refer to the evolutions, to prove that beginners ought to restrict themselves to a limited number of words, instead of indiscriminately aspiring to a whole language at once.

The complement for an educated man is said to be four thousand words, and it is highly desirable that it should be gradually attained. But people generally work without prospectively

fixing any limit to their acquisitions. The dictionary gives the idea of interminability, and great scholars pursue the study of a language for twenty, thirty, or forty years, and it still remains unexhausted and inexhaustible. Influenced by such examples, and acting upon the notion that the indefinite course is the right one, men pore over their books, and obtain an eye-knowledge of many thousands of words, while the colloquial part of the work is postponed till the Greek Kalends.

We are not bound to give credit to the assertion that the illiterate employ only three or four hundred words, but it is true that they seldom exceed that number in conversing on any one subject. If then one man or woman can be found who speaks fluently and well with so small a stock, a learner will have full exercise for his memory, ample scope for study and practice, and sufficient material for expressing his thoughts on all ordinary subjects, within the same limit.

With a supply of less than a hundred foreign words, there are many people who seem to be very communicative on their travels. But no two beginners ever exhibit precisely the same degree of readiness both in understanding, and in making themselves understood. Comparisons are therefore useless and mischievous. Those who have the smallest stock are often more successful in speaking

than the possessors of thousands of words. This sort of success should be the learner's aim; but he is not to stop short when he attains the minimum. On the contrary, he ought not to make a single day's pause in his career, but to proceed, step by step, to the full colloquial "mastery" of the language. *Nil actum reputans, dum quid superesset agendum.*

CHAPTER V.

THE PROCESS.

IT must be borne in mind that this scheme is strictly initiatory, and that it is specially designed for those who have not, or imagine that they have not, the organ of language well developed. It only professes to furnish a clue to facilitate the pilgrim's progress through that labyrinth of words, in which so many become bewildered in the first week.

Adults learn to talk by various methods, more or less philosophical ; but a child, ten years old, has greater success in a shorter time, and with less exertion ; and his operations will bear comparison in their results with the most scientific processes. By dint of a succession of efforts of observation, imitation, and repetition at very short intervals, he contrives both to understand and to speak a foreign language in a few weeks. This twofold

process' baffles an educated adult, because he has been trained to observe words more than sentences; and he tries rather to understand, than to reproduce what is spoken. Uneducated people, on the other hand, follow the child's course, and learn ready made sentences, except when they are misled by the example or the advice of their betters.

As a child puts no restriction on himself in listening to the conversations going on around him, his progress is often seriously retarded thereby. His impulse is to revert to the sentence which was previously running in his head, but during the distraction of his attention, a very valuable one may slip from the memory, not to be recovered perhaps for months, when he may chance to hear it again. This gives to his progress an uncertainty, which we can avoid by learning selected sentences in a regular systematic manner.

The confusion created in the minds of adults by hearing a multiplicity of words, uttered at the rate of two hundred in a minute, may be effectually prevented by separating the two processes above mentioned. It is a great simplification of the work to learn to speak first, without attempting to understand what is spoken. It is better to learn one practical sentence thoroughly, than to sit listening for hours to the conversation of foreigners, because most of the words that we hear are lost; the few unconnected words which we recall are of

very little value, being guessed and learned at hazard; and those which we partially remember do us positive and permanent harm, through the inaccuracy of the impressions which they leave behind.

The attention is severely tasked, but not in a rational way, for nothing definite or practical is gained, commensurate with the exertion put forth; and the little that is remembered escapes again, for want of timely recapitulations. The learner is puzzled, fatigued, and discouraged; and each succeeding effort of a similar kind leads to still further encumbrance of the memory, by increasing the stock of half-forgotten and mis-remembered words. Reading adds to this accumulation, and grammar complicates the difficulty, and intensifies the confusion.

It will be a boon to beginners if we can rescue them from that false position in which they find themselves placed when they have acquired a bad habit of pronunciation, and have loaded the memory with a crude, undigested mass of incoherent words.

Those who only wish for a useful smattering of a language, need not undertake more than the first and fourth parts of the following process, before they go abroad.

Those who condemn the system at first sight, as slow and ineffective, must bear in mind that its object is to exempt them from the dreary study of

grammar, and yet to enable them to speak with fluency, and idiomatic purity. If, protesting against the division of the child's process into two parts, they resolve to travel abroad unprepared, let them go and prosper; but let them avoid books, and abandon the vague hazy notion that the power of speaking any language will come unsought, or be acquired by mere listening.

The beginner need not be under any apprehension about forsaking the old beaten track; because, as the scheme is unfolded, it will be seen that instead of those incomplete, uncertain, indefinite acquirements which shrink from all scrutiny at the outset, it will insure a steady, clearly-defined advance from day to day.

I. During the first stage, which is to be regarded principally as a study of pronunciation, five or six sentences, containing altogether about a hundred words, are to be committed to memory, one by one, very perfectly. The true sounds and the proper intonation of each clause are to be acquired by employing a native to say them, over and over, and by diligently echoing, and striving to appropriate his utterance of them. This exercise should never exceed ten minutes at a time, but it may be repeated several times a day; and the oftener it is resumed at intervals, the better will be the pronunciation. No talking should be allowed while

it is going on, because, whatever may be the amount of success, the imitative exercise should be continued, in order that the habit may be confirmed.

The clause or phrase, which he undertakes to learn first, is not to be analysed, or even divided into words, until an easy and correct utterance of the whole of its combined sounds has been obtained. A translation may then be received, with a full explanation of each word; but the beginner must not ask for the nominative case, or the root, or for any other variety of any word.

As the memory is not to be trusted to reproduce unfamiliar sounds and tones, and as the learner is not to see their symbolic representatives on paper, nor even to imagine the spelling, he must begin every lesson by echoing the teacher's voice in the utterance of *all* the words that have been previously acquired.

The exclusive, restrictive character of this scheme constitutes its strength. The learner's path is fenced in, and he must not overleap the barriers.

Grammars and all other books are forbidden.

On the principle that all the words of the first sentence are to be utilized to the utmost, before the memory receives an additional burden, the teacher must see what minor combinations it will afford, without any transposition of the words; and

he must utter these aloud, one after another, that the beginner may echo them, and thus fix them in his memory.

The clauses of the second sentence are to be acquired in like manner, one by one, and the words are to be interchanged with those of the first, in such a manner as to accomplish the gradual unification of the whole stock. But no changes of case or tense are to be permitted, and the beginner must never presume to compose a sentence independently for himself.

Translations of the minor sentences into the learner's mother tongue must be kept as an exercise-book for constant use. When he can translate all of them as correctly and as fluently as he uses his native language, but not till then, he may begin the third sentence. The first two, however, are not be laid aside like worn-out garments, only to be used on a rainy day. But he must diligently recapitulate their variations, with the words of each new clause interwoven among them. This is the most effectual and easy way of fixing new words in the memory, without the drudgery of learning them by mere repetition.

If the learner ever begins a new sentence before he has gained a perfect "mastery" over all those preceding it, he violates the principle on which the scheme is founded, and in so doing he abandons it altogether. For the words are either

known or unknown. They either float on the surface of the memory, or sink into the mud. Gradations of knowledge are inadmissible, for if we recognise any middle state, all becomes confusion and disorder.

Facility in wielding the combinations of a sentence, is not to be acquired by neglecting them, and proceeding, *re infectâ*, to bestow the whole attention upon another, equally complicated, and capable of immensely increasing the number of combinations, by interchanges of the words.

The notion that this may be done with impunity, has led to the downfall of many an enthusiastic beginner; but the fallacy is worn so completely threadbare, that it is easy to see through it, when it is held up to the light. It took its rise during the time when a language was treated as a huge mass of incoherent words. But the sterility of unconnected words, and the waste of time in acquiring them, are not less conspicuous than the fecundity of practical sentences, and the economy of time and labour secured by learning them by rote, and then "mastering" their variations.

The difficulty or perhaps impossibility of finding teachers of pronunciation, does not constitute a defect in this system. It only leaves the learner where it found him, out of reach of the requisite appliances, but still on a par with the majority,

who pronounce a foreign tongue just as they speak their own. That course may be very convenient, but nature and reason loudly protest against it. For when our first sentence proves to be incomprehensible to the native to whom we address it, they warn us, very significantly, that we ought to learn to pronounce it intelligibly, before we undertake the second. But routine rides roughshod over reason and nature, and tramples them in the dust.

There is nothing which so greatly disturbs all calculations, and produces so much confusion in the discussion of the problem before us, as the various degrees of difficulty experienced by beginners in acquiring a foreign pronunciation. There are some languages in which it may be attained in two or three days to a very useful extent, by means of numerous short lessons. If the reader, then, will admit the possibility of thus acquiring the pronunciation separately at the outset, the process will stand on its own merits, independently of the imitative talents of the learners. In beginning the classical languages, all are upon an equal footing. The faculty of reproducing unfamiliar sounds, is not brought into requisition; and whether it be feebly or powerfully developed, the learner's progress is neither impeded nor accelerated thereby.

The philosophy of the practice of learning a great many foreign words imperfectly, and when they are forgotten, learning them over and over

again, is inscrutable. As a Sisyphean occupation for little boys, it is an excellent contrivance. This mysterious rite, which originated in the dark ages, and may have been devised to check the intrusive ardour of vulgar aspirants to literature, is still solemnized under the significant, but imposing name of "grounding." The metaphor implies that the little slaves, chained to their oars, are compelled to pull hard, all day long, in shallow waters. Their boat is generally aground, but ever and anon they make a little headway. The wind and tide being always against them, their progress is slow, they often lose what they have gained, and take the ground again. If this goes on for a year or two, they are said to be thoroughly grounded. The ceremony is conducted with religious austerity and gravity, and the doctrine is inculcated that the depravity of human nature is so great, that without a careful study of grammar we cannot help using bad language.

Book-grammar, however, is artificial, not natural. Children in a state of freedom instinctively take the opposite course, pulling only as a recreation, running rapidly before the wind and tide, with all sail set, and carefully eschewing the war of elements in which the others are perpetually engaged.

II. The second step is writing, which precedes, because it includes, reading.

If the Roman letters are employed, and if they are familiar to the learner, he may copy ten words of that sentence which he pronounces most correctly. He should write them in large round hand, over and over again, for a quarter of an hour. The memory is a deceiver, and therefore the learner should begin each sitting by copying the preceding lessons once, and then writing them again from recollection.

It may be objected that ten words will call forth no exertion of the memory; but the design of all these restrictions is to employ that faculty so that its full power shall be employed in accomplishing a very little, very perfectly.

If an unknown character is employed, the writing may be commenced on the third day. The pupil should not learn more than three letters a day; he must not see any of the other letters, and he must not learn any of their names. He is to copy any one of the words which he knows, but nothing can be gained by talking about the letters, and therefore the alphabet is not required, and it ought not to be learned.

The best plan is to trace the foreign characters on a gigantic scale, with the finger on the table. But if the pupil prefers making unsightly scrawls on paper, let him always destroy his performance as soon as he has finished it.

He is never to begin a new lesson, unless he

can write out, promptly and faultlessly, every variation that can be made artificially out of the letters which he has already been taught. By moving forward deliberately, he will learn more rapidly, and much more thoroughly than those who grasp at the whole alphabet at once, thus doing that injustice to the memory which it is the special design of this system to prevent.

In learning English no one should attempt to write, until he has "mastered" one hundred words. In French he should first "master" two hundred; but he must not undertake more than five words at a time in either of those languages.

While the writing is going on, another set of sentences, containing a hundred new words, is to be "mastered" in the same form. In these, the constructions omitted in the first set must be introduced, together with the rest of the prepositions, adverbs, &c., in most general use. Each of these sentences, in its turn, is to be worked into the former set by interchanges; but without any alterations in the tenses and cases.

In translating the variations of the English sentences into the foreign tongue, there must be no hesitation in the delivery; but the learner must be prompted, whether he likes it or not, whenever a word does not come instantaneously to his lips.

The accurate recollection of the sentences, both primary and secondary, will be a perfect safeguard against grammatical errors, and will afford a

guarantee for the correctness, and the idiomatic purity of these oral compositions.

III. The manner in which the words of each sentence are capable of being transposed must now be exhibited, and explained to the learner; and he must practise translating, *vivâ voce*, the transposed English sentences. This will greatly enlarge and diversify his power of composition, while it affords him time to "master" the written characters. The object of reserving this exercise so long is to give the learner ample time to secure the recollection of the sentences in their original idiomatic form, before he breaks them up into new combinations.

IV. He must next practise the composition of new varieties of the sentences, with the aid of a paradigm, or table of inflections, in order to acquire the power of using, with freedom, the whole of the tenses and cases belonging to those words which he has learned.

The table is to be prepared so that the eye may command, *at one view*, the whole of the terminations of all the variable parts of speech. No new words are to be employed; but the English sentences are to be thrown into different combinations, by changing one word at a time; then two; and then three. The object is to enable the learner to translate the altered sentences by word of mouth, with perfect accuracy, and more readily

than he could do, if he were to trust to his memory. It is not a reasoning process that he has to perform, but a habit which he has to acquire in a quasi-mechanical manner.

The labour and difficulty of speaking a language are in proportion to the number of items in this table, and to their irregularity; but as, in highly-inflected languages, it is necessary to postpone the acquisition of many forms, the table may be so far reduced in its dimensions, as to present in the first instance one half, or one fourth, or even a smaller proportion of the variations of irregular parts of speech. By using this table the learner becomes practically familiarized with the terminations, far more effectually than he could be by going through the uninteresting labour, usually imposed upon beginners, of learning them by rote. But even though he may have committed them all carefully to memory, he must nevertheless make use of the table in the manner prescribed, and he must not advance to the next part of the process, till he finds that his memory outstrips his eye to such an extent, that he can employ all the most useful inflections with fluency, accuracy, and promptitude.

Thus far extends the initiatory portion of the process, and here all restrictions cease. The learner may go abroad, and betake himself to books, and revel with impunity in the luxuries of the

grammar and the dictionary. He may cram a great many words into his memory every day, and they will do him no harm. He may also read from morning till night. But if he wishes to make rapid progress in talking, he must practise oral composition for at least three half hours every day, although he cannot do it too often.

If the learner, however, should come thus far, he will probably come farther, and adhere to the scheme throughout.

V. Two whole days are now to be devoted to perusing a foreign book, or newspaper, with a translation; not laboriously, nor even carefully, but rapidly and superficially.

Two copies of the book or paper in each language being procured, the learner should read out a clause or a short sentence to a native, whose business it will be to read aloud in return the corresponding foreign words. The pupil is to follow the reader's course with the eye, and carefully to echo the tones of his voice, not word by word, but clause by clause.

The eye, the ear, and the vocal organs being thus intelligently exercised in unison, he becomes rapidly familiarized with the most common words, with the characters, with the various constructions, with the intonation, and with the true meaning of the sentences.

This is incomparably the best way of learning

to read manuscripts, hieroglyphics, or any illegible scribblings, provided that it be done slowly, and with frequent reiterations during the first few lessons.

Many words recur frequently in every page, and the most common idioms appear again and again; and these, without any intellectual exertion being put forth, will fix themselves in the memory in a degree proportionate to the frequency of their recurrence.

There must be no loitering to solve difficulties, or to make sure of remembering any particular words; because this is intended to be a process of cursory observation, not of close study,—of habituation, not of investigation,—of passive reception, not of active exercitation of the intellect. Obscure passages, however, should be marked with a pencil for ulterior reference, so that the learner may occasionally look back, and see that the difficulties have vanished behind him.

The most practical sentences should be marked with a pencil during these readings, and the ground should be retrodden at the end of every half hour's work, in order that those sentences may be read very rapidly a second time; and then a fresh start should be made. Each recapitulation should include the whole of the marked sentences. Occasionally the beginner should carry on the exercise without looking at the foreign book; but this

should only be done for a short time, when the sentences are easy, or during the recapitulations aforesaid.

On the morrow, let the work be resumed in similar form for one hour; and then let all the marked sentences be read aloud, clause by clause, in order that the beginner may echo them, and translate them off-hand into his own tongue.

Next let some colloquial sentences be translated briefly into English by the teacher, and then read by him at length in the original. These are to be echoed by the learner, to be re-translated literally into English, and then reproduced briefly and rapidly in the foreign language.

During these operations the learner is not to play the critic, nor to put grammatical questions; nor is he to offer any opposition to that continual prompting, whereby his deliberations about each word must be cut short, and limited to five or six seconds. A sentence may be repeated to him, if he requires it, but no time can be spared for discussion or deliberation. If the obscure passages are marked with a pencil, they can be examined at leisure afterwards.

Next let the prompter select and recite anecdotes more or less briefly in English, and then read the original aloud, clause by clause, taking care to simplify the language when it is obscure, and to amplify it when it is concise. The learner

should translate some clauses, if he can, without looking at the book, but he must not loiter to cudgel his brains.

Nothing should ever be read aloud to him, unless the purport of it has been previously mentioned.

In this fifth part of the process, the prompter is not to guide and control the learner, but is to be quite under his command; with this reservation alone, that whenever the learner falters, he must help him. There is to be no questioning, no lecturing, no teaching, no taxing of the memory, but every defect of knowledge or of memory is to be instantly supplied. The work is to be carried on with that urgency which is employed in cramming for some great examination, when there are only two or three days left, and every moment is precious.

The reports of celebrated trials, in which the questions appear at full length, and in which the same story is told by several people in succession, each in his own phraseology, form the best materials for these two days' labour; because the sentences are generally plain, practical, and of the proper length.

As colloquial is very different from book-language, and the latter is a wretched substitute for it, narrative compositions, however elegant they may be, are unsuitable. A grand historic style is still more objectionable, and poetry is utterly

useless. A comedy will always afford good practice, but care should be taken to select the most useful passages, and to avoid unusual words, and unpractical sentences.

During the first four stages, the pupil is supposed to have "mastered" two hundred of the words in most common use; to be quite familiar with all the terminations of their tenses and cases; and to have acquired a general insight into the structure of sentences. He is therefore in a position to encounter hundreds of new words, without being perplexed by them.

This fifth part of the process is designed to show how the beginner may compress into a narrow compass that course of observation and habituation, by means of which children, ten or twelve years old, when taken abroad, are enabled both to understand, and to talk a new language at the end of a few weeks; which a little child passes through very slowly, when struggling all alone to find what is imitable and practical in the conversation of his elders; which every one who goes abroad to learn a language by mere listening, pursues tediously, unsatisfactorily, and unsystematically; and which the youth of England slowly and imperfectly work out for themselves, by laboriously ploughing through books, with a grammar and a dictionary yoked together, in the vain hope of reaping what they do not sow.

The last labour under some disadvantages which this exercise will obviate. They suffer from encountering, without due preparation, thousands of words, many of which are useless, and most of which are doomed to be either wholly or partially forgotten within three hours; from neglecting oral composition; from committing words, instead of sentences, to memory; from studying a whole language at once, instead of gradually acquiring the power of using the most essential portion of it; and from a severe and toilsome application, which, as respects the colloquial part, yields no definite practical equivalent for the expenditure of thought, of time, and of labour.

In this cursory operation, the beginner will have sixteen hours of bookwork, with intervals of leisure equally distributed through the day.

The virtue of this fifth part consists in its transporting the learner to a foreign atmosphere, amongst foreign sounds and idioms, for two whole days. It quickens his faculty of comprehending what he hears, by giving him successively in advance, the full literal translation of a clause, of a sentence, of a paragraph; then a briefer translation; then a summary, and finally a mere clue.

Although sustained attention is exacted, the intellectual exertion is very slight, the progress is graduated, and recapitulations intervene.

It agrees with the course of nature, displayed

in the attainment of their own language by little children. The wonderment depicted in their faces, while they listen to some stirring tale that has been told a hundred times before, does not bespeak stupidity or failure of memory; because any alteration in the dialogue, which to their minds is the most striking and practical part, always arrests their attention, and they instantly supply the original words. But it indicates a keen observation and appreciation of the marvellous and magical variety of that word-painting, which they would not be able to understand, but for their previous familiarity with the incidents. It is by telling such stories to other children, with a little aid at first from their parents, that a command of words, a power of graphic description, and even a strain of eloquence, are sometimes attained in very early life. And it is by assiduous practice, with a small stock of words, in a very small range of thought, that adults obtain the free use and command of a foreign language.

VI. The learner's next step is to take up an interesting book in his own language, to select therefrom sentences containing words with which he is familiar in the foreign tongue; to shorten long periods; to amplify single clauses into complete sentences, and one by one to translate them.

Easy sentences are not to be despised. In those which are so complicated that he cannot

rapidly reduce them, it will be enough to arrange the words in the order which the foreign idiom requires. He should also construct out of the materials before him some imperative and interrogative sentences of ten or twelve words each, increasing the length by degrees, translating them as he goes along, marking the best of them in the margin, and occasionally recapitulating them. The learner is not to bind himself rigidly to the words which he finds in the book, because this would effectually check the freedom which he is striving to gain in the construction of complete sentences. He may insert other words at pleasure.

The object of this exercise is not to teach him new words, but to impart fluency and promptitude in making use of those words and phrases which he has learned, and in throwing them into colloquial sentences containing conjunctions, interrogative adverbs, pronouns, and prepositions. These translations are never to be written. The power of expressing the ideas of an author in different words, whether it be done by amplification, by circumlocution, or by simplification, should be carefully cultivated, in order that when the learner engages in conversation, he may be able with promptitude to escape from a difficulty by making a total change in the form of the sentence which he wishes to deliver. This constitutes the speciality of the accomplished linguist.

A dictionary causes grievous interruption to the trains of thought, besides involving loss of time, uncertainty, misdirection, and confusion. It is a chaos of words to a beginner, and it ought never to be resorted to when a native is at hand, or when a translation is available.

When the learner finds a noun or a verb which he does not know how to translate, he should either ask for the foreign word before he begins, or, if he is practising alone, he should substitute another one for it, always selecting for this purpose some particularly useful verbs and nouns (two of each), using them through the whole sitting, and thus impressing them on his memory. His progress in wielding those words which he knows ought never to be interrupted by his ignorance of individual words casually encountered. Time given to deliberation is wasted, and there is no merit in producing a word long after it is wanted. Promptitude is the great object, combined, of course, with accuracy.

If he takes up the translation of a foreign work for this exercise, his composition is on no account to be compared with the original, to see whether it corresponds or not. If he gives a correct translation, it is enough. No man of ordinary memory can recite an anecdote, even in his own language, in the exact words in which he casually heard, or read it, half an hour before.

Out of a thousand listeners, no two would give similarly worded versions of a story occupying half an octavo page. To exact a precise counterpart of the original text of any book from a foreigner, more especially from one who has not attempted to commit it to memory, and most especially from one who has never seen the work, is preposterous.

Nothing can be more disheartening to a beginner, than to be checked at every second or third word, by cries of No, No, No, from a pedagogue, looking at the original work, and indulging in the insane expectation of hearing the exact words of the author. This gross and stolid misconception has probably conduced to the discontinuance of Roger Ascham's method of double translations, which is of great value at the proper time, and under proper limitation.

If Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, had submitted to be thus snubbed at the outset of her classical career, she never would have risen to the pre-eminence which she attained under Roger's guidance. It was only at the very close of a long course of study, that she acquired the power of putting her own translations of Cicero and Demosthenes into the oratorical diction for which she ultimately became so renowned. And even then she attained it only by close study, as a preparation for each effort.

Self-snubbing, on the odious principle above

described, is extensively practised by tourists, who may be seen in picturesque localities, with one column of a dialogue book conscientiously folded back, while they are saying their appointed task. Now the idea of a rigorous ordeal is excellent, and the acquisition of useful ready-made sentences is beyond all praise. But yet the success is very small, because they try to swallow a whole page at one mouthful, instead of a single sentence, and because the eye roams unrestrained through the volume, and thus the memory is either choked or surfeited.

This sixth exercise is an extension of the fourth part of the process, and therefore the synopsis is to be freely used, in order to lighten the labour, and to remedy all defects of accuracy and fluency. It should be practised with recapitulations every day, in preference to any other exercise, or even to the exclusion of every thing else.

VII. The next step in the scheme is to associate with foreigners, to familiarize the ear to the tones of their voices.

No one should listen to conversation until he has "mastered" a few sentences containing about two hundred of the most common words. He will find difficulty enough in recognizing those which he knows, when he first hears them uttered by strange voices in strange and unexpected combinations; and of course new phrases,

containing new words, will be unintelligible to him. He must learn to express his own thoughts, before he can expect to converse.

He should always obtain, if possible, a clue to the conversation, because without this an active mind is sure to receive wrong impressions. It is useful to frequent public places as a listener; to ask several people in succession for the news of the day, after having carefully read it all beforehand; to hear the Church Service, or any well known book, read aloud; but especially to engage strangers in conversation on subjects which he has previously discussed with others, in order that he may repeat his own questions and observations, with additions and improvements. These second-hand conversations are by far the most instructive.

It is true that very animated gesticulations will often enable us to conjecture what two foreigners are saying, even when they are out of earshot, but this is an exercise of our natural sagacity, not of our knowledge of the language; and as we all possessed it in infancy, and as we never lose it entirely in after life, there is no danger to be apprehended from keeping it in reserve for a few weeks.

As the true sounds of a foreign sentence cannot be retained by a beginner, unless he listens to them undisturbedly, and hears them uttered two or three times at least, he can do himself very little

good by suddenly exposing himself, without any training, to a Babel of words. And unless he repeats and imitates what he hears, he may listen for a long time without deriving any benefit from it.

It is not to be denied that people do learn to speak a language, even under the most unfavourable circumstances; but as they have no system, and as they cannot explain how they do it, it may be confidently assumed that they apply themselves, like children, unconsciously, to the imitation and repetition of sentences; and that their success depends entirely on the suitability of what they learn by chance.

So also, without previously learning the letters, people may acquire the power of reading a foreign language, if with a book open before them, they carefully follow with their eyes, the course of a person reading aloud to them, as slowly as they require. Many children learn to read their own language in this manner, without spelling, and it is by far the best method, because children so taught, generally learn orthography more rapidly than others.

On the other hand, there are not a few men, who find themselves quite helpless when travelling in France, although they can read a French novel as easily as one in their own language; and can understand a great deal of what they hear spoken.

They cannot put their words into sentences, because they are not in possession of any sentences to put them into; nor have they ever given up one whole day to making attempts at talking; nor have they persevered in systematic oral composition, by translating dialogues, or making imaginary conversations even for a few minutes a day; but they console themselves with the reflection, that their book-knowledge is the greatest, and most useful attainment, and that after all "any noodle can talk if he tries."

This is a fact not to be denied, nor even questioned for a moment; but yet the excuse is a very contemptible one; because in reality they do not know how to try, and they are conscious that this is the cause of their own delinquency. To try without some definite plan, which will afford them a rational expectation of success, is repugnant to their feelings, and therefore they will not try.

When he first attempts to talk, an Englishman feels and looks very like a school-boy who is saying a lesson, keenly watched by others who are intent on detecting flaws in his compositions. And as many intelligent men acknowledge that they have blundered into a colloquial knowledge, and as they urge others to begin in the same way, he seriously inclines to their strongly-expressed opinion that it is the only possible way. But this

wilful premeditated blundering, this barbarous massacre of a language in cold blood, is an outrage to all his scholarly feelings. He shrinks from talking till circumstances force him into it, and then he bitterly repents that he had not initiated himself before.

It vexes him to hear educated men setting grammar, idiom, and pronunciation at defiance; but he is not sure that he can acquit himself much better. Nor does he like to expose himself to the scoffs of those who pretend to know more than he does, and yet will not attempt to speak, lest they should commit themselves.

We often hear a man who is invited to act as interpreter to a party, decline the honour, on the plea that "he would rather not make a fool of himself." If he happens to be a man of reputed ability, it requires some hardihood in a beginner to attempt to perform the office from which the former shrinks. It shocks him to find that all his classical training is utterly worthless in a practical point of view, and it irritates him to hear that he can only blunder into correctness by ridiculous guesses. This violation of all his feelings, and this apprehension that he is exposing himself to ridicule, cause him to appear to great disadvantage in the eyes of foreigners.

He has never been told that each day should have its definite lesson in the form of a colloquial

sentence, and that he may learn it to perfection before he uses it in public. His school traditions lead him to suppose that he can manufacture foreign sentences for himself, and he thinks it childish and shabby to learn them ready-made.

He does not know that the benefit derived from hearing a foreigner speak to him, is as nothing when compared with that which results from his own efforts to carry on the conversation; and the idea has never occurred to him that he may practise this in solitude far better than with a pedantic teacher, or a voluble stranger, who forces him to speak on unfamiliar subjects, and who hurries, interrupts, puzzles, thwarts, and disappoints him, in the most amiable and courteous manner.

The colloquial power is often decried as an acquisition of little merit; but on examination it will be found to be more difficult than descriptive composition, because a greater variety of constructions is required, together with a peculiar phraseology. It also exacts a thorough command over the whole of the pronouns, and a practical knowledge of the terminations of verbs, greater in the ratio of at least two to one.

Reading, it is true, imparts an acquaintance with ten times as many words; but it does not insure that "mastery" which we require.

To a traveller, the colloquial is unquestionably the more useful acquisition, because a man who

is able to talk, though he does not know a single letter of the foreign character, can, on an emergency, dictate to an amanuensis; and though he cannot read, he can understand what is read to him, and if he mistrusts one reader, he can employ another.

Again, the colloquial power is the more valuable at first, because they who possess it can learn to read much more easily than those who know nothing of the language; and in the matter of letter writing, if they can express themselves correctly by word of mouth when dictating to another, they will compose in a superior manner during the more deliberate process of writing.

But here we encounter the great scarecrow orthography, which in English and French, and some few other languages, presents difficulties that can only be slowly overcome by steady and systematic application.

Foreigners must bear in mind that accuracy in spelling depends entirely on careful ocular observation, and that analogy is a treacherous guide that can never be depended upon.

When the beginner can spell his two hundred English words correctly, he must practise writing them every day with new words interspersed. When he has advanced as far as five hundred, he may copy out poetry with advantage. Let him examine the spelling of a line of very short metre

four times over, and after this slight exercise of the attention and the memory, let him transcribe it.

The special object of this is to accustom the eye to exercise minute observation. It should not be allowed to wander to any other part of the page. A regular metre is recommended, in order that each act of the memory may be as nearly uniform as possible. Close attention must be given to the work as long as it lasts, and each sitting should be rigorously limited to fifteen minutes; but the beginner, if so disposed, may practise again and again at intervals of at least one hour.

The copy-book ought to be kept absolutely free from the blemish of a mis-spelt word. If three or four mistakes occur in one sitting, a shorter metre should be transcribed. As in talking, fluency and precision are exacted, though not without abundant consideration before-hand, so in writing, every line is to be copied after deliberate ocular examination.

If the spelling of a word happens to be forgotten, it should not be guessed at, but omitted. This rule ought to be inviolably observed at every stage of progress. When a word has been omitted, the whole line in which the blank occurs should be written over again at the end of the page, and once more at the end of the two next exercises.

Words that have been either mis-spelt or obliterated, should be gibbeted in large round text and

hung up, in their correct orthography, in front of the beginner's customary seat. But omissions should be regarded as praiseworthy, rather than blameable.

Whenever the copy-book remains unblemished during eight consecutive sittings, a longer metre may be adopted, but not more than two syllables should be added at each step in advance. Progress ought to be made slowly, and no change in the metre should be allowed until the stipulated conditions have been strictly fulfilled, and confirmed by the test of dictation.

Dictation should be resorted to about twice a week, but it should be limited to the words already learned, and it should always be commenced without any warning. The gibbeted words should be called for, and gradually removed as the learner shows that he has "mastered" them. When a word is asked for, the whole line should be read aloud, but only that one word should be written.

Dictation, as generally conducted, is often productive of more harm than good, because it is carried far beyond reasonable limits. The exercise ought to cease when a certain number of words have been mis-spelt, and time ought not to be wasted in useless and wearisome transcriptions of the commonest words over and over again.

As this exercise requires lively attention, humorous or interesting books alone ought to be

employed. When passages are read aloud relating to subjects of no interest, selected out of books which the beginner has never seen, they discourage him, because he is conscious that he must of necessity commit numerous errors. Such a severe process is only fit for competitive examinations, and even then it is extremely uncertain. It is far better that a beginner should receive daily encouragement for the small successes which he achieves, than that he should be annoyed and disheartened by committing unavoidable mistakes, and by having his ignorance exposed at every sitting.

A clear line should be drawn, if possible, between the known and the unknown words. The former class will include only those, in the writing of which it has been ascertained by dictation that the learner has never made a mistake.

The oftener the copy book is looked at for the purpose of self-examination, the better.

This process being almost mechanical, clever people must not promise themselves greater success in spelling than their neighbours attain. The work may seem endless, but that is no reason for indiscriminately grappling with hundreds of difficulties all at once. In this, as in every other pursuit involving numerous minutiæ, method is essential to sound progress.

The learner should practise letter-writing for half an hour every day, taking care to restrict

himself to those words which he uses in talking; for although they form but a small portion of the language, he will not require many more, and he will always be safe within his own domain. The attainment of four thousand words can only be completed by slow degrees, and the words which are most wanted, ought to be learned first.

Reading, though it be carried on for several hours a day, is of little use in imparting a knowledge of orthography, except when it is attended with close observation, exercised specially upon a very few words.

Nor will reading keep up our colloquial power over a language, although we commence the practice on the very day on which we cease to speak it, and to hear it spoken. Nor will reading, even when supported by close analytical study, restore the colloquial power which has been long out of use. In fact, it confers no more benefit in this respect, than listening inertly to the conversation of foreigners, does in respect to the colloquial power. The practice of reading aloud is said to be beneficial, but it cannot be relied upon, because there is no active exercise of the memory involved in it.

But if there be a daily exercise of oral composition, with a stock of well-chosen sentences, learned thoroughly, and a synoptical* table of the cases and tenses of the nouns and verbs in

constant use, reading, study, and critical discussion are alike unnecessary for the restoration and recovery even of a long-forgotten language; and therefore it is better to dispense with them altogether, until that short and simple process shall have been completed.

But even when it has been honestly gone through, the tenses are very apt to escape from the memory; and therefore those who are in earnest should always carry about with them a reduced synopsis, containing those parts of the verb which, in practice, they find that they are prone either to forget, or to misapply.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SELECTION OF SENTENCES.

THERE is nothing which, strictly speaking, can be called the beginning of a language. It is a globe, the geography of which commences anywhere.

There is no construction, no form of thought, no question, no command, no part of speech, which can rightfully claim priority. Utility is the only consideration in the choice of the first sentences.

As every written word consists of letters arranged in a certain established, inviolable order, so every sentence of a new language must be regarded as an indivisible, inseparable combination, until the memory has grasped it securely.

The selection of certain words for the first sentence may be termed arbitrary, but it no more interferes with their ulterior employment, in whatever other positions they may be required, than

the adoption of certain letters for writing a word, prevents their introduction into other words.

When we begin by dismembering sentences, and reducing them to their elements, as exhibited in a grammar, before we have learned them perfectly, we are unable to reproduce them in their original form, because a state of confusion has been created in the brain, not unlike that which is experienced by a novice in playing at chess. If, after ransacking our brains, we can slowly recall the words, our teachers are satisfied, even although we cannot replace them in their original order. But we must not be so easily satisfied; because the true collocation of the words is of infinitely greater importance than any thing else; and there can be no hardship in exacting it rigorously from those who have only to learn a very few words at a time, and who may therefore reasonably be expected to reproduce them with the utmost fluency, in their proper order.

The colloquial acquisition of a language does not require a command over the whole dictionary; for such a power is absolutely unattainable, even by lexicographers; but it implies the "mastery" over the whole range of very common words.

Our preparatory training generally exacts an acquaintance with the whole of the syntactical combinations, and of all the cases and tenses of all those declinable words, which are most frequently

used, whether regular or irregular. This is useful knowledge for those who are to begin with books, and to whom the recognition of words, and their terminations, is all-important; but it is an impediment to those from whom the reproduction of words in their appointed places is exacted as the chief consideration.

It is a mistake to begin by learning by rote all the cases and tenses of all the declinable words. Teachers recommend this course, because of the extreme difficulty of using them, but it is on this very ground that it is objectionable. When we have learned them thoroughly, we are supposed to have gained the power of using them; but this is a fiction, which is exposed the moment we attempt oral composition.

Every well-chosen sentence that we "master" in its integrity, puts us into possession of some of those items which are exhibited in grammars, and thus we may gradually learn the whole of them. But those items which we learn first cannot be distinctly and practically retained, unless we can employ them with perfect freedom; nor will the genuine construction and collocation remain durably in the memory, unless recapitulation and imitative oral composition on a limited scale are practised every day. By not complying with these conditions, and by shackling ourselves with superfluous formalities, we retard our progress; and the

incessant repetition of the non-essential, affords no compensation for the non-repetition of the essential.

It is a well-known fact that boys, who have learned to converse fluently on their travels abroad, and are under orders to keep up their knowledge of the foreign language at an English school, very frequently return to their agonized parents in the holidays, speaking spurious French or German, instead of the genuine idiomatic forms of expression, which were habitual to them before. The grammar and exercise system, which thus obliterates and eradicates a vernacular knowledge of a language, and substitutes translated English phrases, must be essentially anti-vernacular, or else we must conclude that it has been grossly misunderstood, and misapplied.

Many writers have remarked, that all the constructions of a language may generally be found in a few pages of any book; or even within the limits of one page. But they parade the fact without making the right use of it. They do not venture to draw the legitimate and obvious conclusion, that within that small compass we may acquire a knowledge of all the constructions. Neither do they venture to exhibit one such page as a specimen; nor do they show us practically how we may utilize the fact which they proclaim.

In what manner a language may be condensed

into one page, so far as the regular constructions are concerned, may be inferred from inspecting the concise syntax of our own tongue, in the folio edition of Johnson's Dictionary. That high authority gives only five rules, the whole of which may be exemplified in a sentence of eight words. In like manner every grammarian lays down, according to his own views of the language of which he treats, a set of rules, the most essential of which may be exhibited in a few sentences. The most copious syntax may thus be reduced to a small compass, as may be proved by observing how many Latin rules must be complied with in translating English sentences extending to the length of five lines of print.

This principle of condensation must be applied in the preparation of sentences for beginners. The foreign language ought to be presented to the learner in such a manner as to show him, in the primary sentences, the most striking contrasts to the constructions of his own tongue, in order to accustom him, from the outset, to employ forms of expression which are quite at variance with his habits of thought. A thorough adaptation of two languages to each other, demands the hand of an expert in both; but very little learning and skill are required for the compression, into a few sentences, of all the peculiar syntactical constructions.

The greatest successes ever obtained by linguists have, in all probability, been due to the compactness of the form in which they "mastered" the constructions, embodied in sentences of the most practical description. But there is no necessity for compressing them into a smaller compass than a set of sentences, containing one hundred words.

The danger against which every learner has to be especially protected, is the tendency to translate his own thoughts, word for word. There are some languages in which every sentence so constructed, must be wrong, although it may be grammatically correct. Here is the vulnerable point of those methods in which grammar is held to be the one essential.

A beginner cannot arrange words in combinations to which he is practically a stranger; but if he learns by rote a comprehensive set of idiomatic sentences, and naturalizes all the words by diligent practice, restricted rigorously to that selection, he is in actual possession of all the constructions, although he has never seen or heard of a syntax.

The course of nature combines analysis and synthesis, with a practical knowledge of all the constructions, and with a mere sufficiency, instead of a superabundance of words. Idiomatic sentences become fixtures in the memory, and the

analysis of them is so simple, that it is easily performed even by young children. The latter have not, and they do not require that critical power, which educated men display in their investigations into the component parts of a new language, and the peculiar constructions thereof. The process is altogether different, and the soundness of the principle is obvious. For sentences learned by rote gradually dissolve themselves, and become decomposed, when the words are severally used in other combinations, in the hearing of the child.

Thus, if he has learned the following five syllables, "Give me some of that," which to him are but one word or utterance, indivisible in the first instance, his attention is attracted by any portions of it, which he may chance to hear afterwards applied in a different manner, as "Give me that;" "I want some of that," &c. He observes those variations; and by degrees he comprehends them, and employs them himself, not in supersession of the original sentence, but in addition to it. In this manner the analysis becomes, for all practical purposes, complete; and the meaning of the whole sentence becomes more and more clearly understood. He cannot be said to understand each of the words thoroughly, but he uses them intelligently and accurately. He cannot assign a score of meanings to the preposition "of," but his

ignorance is not inexcusable, and it is no bar to his progress.

Such is the analysis of nature, resulting from a series of observations and inferences, drawn by infants from the known to the unknown; from the whole to its parts.

The synthetic operation is merely the insertion of other words, one by one, into their appropriate niches in the sentences learned by rote. Each new word corresponds grammatically with that which it displaces. Thus, in the sentence above given, he may introduce "him" instead of "me," and "those" instead of "that." The substitution of the right word, in the right form, without any knowledge of grammar, results from that instinct of imitation and repetition, which operates universally in the unsophisticated minds of children.

The intellectual power exercised in these operations is so trifling, that they scarcely deserve to be called reasoning processes. And yet, if a man attempts oral composition before he is possessed of a stock of words engraved on his memory in purely idiomatic combinations, all the words, cases, tenses, and rules which his memory has retained incoherently, all his critical knowledge of the language, and all his intellectual power seem to be of no avail. He does not express himself idiomatically, because he has not the tools wherewith to perform the synthetical operation.

It is not enough, however, merely to obtain possession of the tools; but the dexterity of the skilled workman must be superadded by assiduous practice in using them. To stop short of this, is to render all the previous acquisitions lifeless and nugatory.

The combination of analysis and synthesis, in the child's process, is not due to any sudden development of his intellectual faculties; but there is an unwritten law of which he seems to have an intuitive perception. It is that essence of language which the subtle genius of the inventor of grammar discerned, which with infinite difficulty he expressed in hard words, and in an evil hour shaped into a system and a science.

How to separate grammar from its technicalities, and explain the constructions of a language in simple, intelligible terms, is a problem which seems to have escaped attention, or to have baffled inquiry. The general impression is that grammar is inseparable and impalpable, but it does not necessarily follow that it is incommunicable; for it is an ingredient or property of language, and there is no necessity for abstracting it. It is inherent in every sentence of every language, and therefore those who "master" a complete set of sentences are in full possession of it in its concrete form, if such a term may be applied. When we deal with it in the abstract, it is highly

metaphysical and abstruse, and it is therefore a most unsuitable training for the colloquial acquisition of a language.

Children taken abroad have better success, under the unwritten law, than we obtain from grammar. They reproduce sentences uttered by foreigners, while our only resource is to translate our own forms of speech, and to reason, where translation misleads us, and reasoning is out of place. The unwritten law guides children aright, and it will, undoubtedly, be equally true to us, unless we counteract it by some antagonistic course of procedure.

In the child's method, the ideal syntax comes first, in company with some of the rudiments and elements. The rest gradually follow, mingled with other combinations. Whenever he speaks correctly, we say that he obeys the rule of syntax, or the law of the language. But he obeys it unwittingly, for the rules have never been given to him; he has not invented them, he does not require them, and if they were communicated to him he could not possibly understand them. Nature imparts to him the whole essence of the language, embodied in those sentences which he learns by rote—the gas with the coal. We spend months in laboriously and needlessly extracting the gas. We smother the fire of memory with masses of coke; but he feeds it with the genuine fuel so frequently and so

lightly that it is always blazing, crackling, and sparkling.

The strict meaning of the words "*elements*" and "*rudiments*," is not very obvious. The former term includes, perhaps, every original word which cannot be decomposed, and every syllable or letter which, though inseparable, has an etymological significance of its own.

Rudiments are variously defined as "elements," or "ingredients," or the "first parts of education," or "rude, unfinished portions," or "inaccurate, unshapen beginnings." Such definitions are not very instructive. But elements are unquestionably included in rudiments; and these are unfinished, inaccurate, unshapen fragments, as compared with sentences or periods, which, being complete, hold a much higher position in the eyes of grammarians. "John walks;"—"It rains;"—"Milk is white;" are pithy propositions which are given to explain to us what periods are. Unfortunately these are supposed to be models, because they are styled complete; and as there is also safety in small efforts at composition, a passion for very concise forms of speech prevails among beginners. As it is impossible, however, to sustain a cheerful conversation on such terms, nature rebels against this limitation. Such little propositions are nothing more than rudiments of language; and although they are also entitled to the more dignified

appellation of sentences, or periods, they only fetter the beginner by restricting him to very incomplete utterances.

A sounder, because more practical, view of the nature of rudiments is suggested by the Hebrew orthography, wherein one word often comprises three, and sometimes four or five of ours. The following sentence, when written in Hebrew, would contain only seven words, according to the divisions marked:

And he sent me | to your territory | with his wife | and her brothers | to save them | from their enemies | who were pursuing them.

Each of these clauses is a rudiment, being an unfinished portion of a sentence. It is true they are neither unshapen nor inaccurate, and therefore they do not harmonize with the definition, but this will be no disadvantage to the beginner. Although they are not periods, they are integral portions of them, and therefore they are equally essential to learners. Moreover, they become complete propositions by implication whenever they are employed as answers to questions.

The beginner should, therefore, learn similar combinations, linked together in circumstantial sentences, not selecting them with a view to attaining the colloquial power with extreme rapidity, but with the more sober consideration that

his progress must be gradually progressive. The combination of nouns with possessive pronouns and prepositions will be found extremely useful, because they may be introduced into almost every sentence that a beginner addresses to foreigners; and in most languages it requires a good deal of practice to transpose and interchange those words. In English alone there is no difficulty in using them.

There are other considerations which recommend these rudimentary forms. Sentences in all languages naturally resolve themselves into such clauses, and in point of length they are on a par with those periods which are usually presented in books for beginners. Moreover, one clause suffices for a lesson; the time occupied in its utterance is only two or three seconds, and the number of times that it can be recalled in thought during five minutes is almost incalculable.

People studying languages abroad are not aware how much their progress is due to their unconscious recitations of such clauses, which they revolve so often in a few seconds, that they make a deep impression upon the memory. So long as beginners lie in wait to seize upon disconnected individual words, they make no progress, because they disregard every little combination which they thoroughly understand. They feel that they have *done* it, and have passed beyond it, and therefore they pay no heed to it. Forgetting that language

is only a series of combinations, they go all wrong. But when they are off their guard, and cease from thwarting the operations of nature, she always re-asserts her power, and they become the unconscious recipients of valuable additions to their stock of combinations, without any spontaneous exertion of the intellect. Whenever the learner leads a conversation, he benefits by receiving rudimentary answers. But when he imagines that it is out of his power to lead, when he restricts himself to yes and no, he subjects himself inevitably to become a mere listener, to hear long sentences without having any clue to the meaning, and thus to forego the twofold advantage of practising oral composition and of receiving short answers, the nature of which he can anticipate so far that he can readily comprehend them.

It is difficult in the extreme to frame a set of sentences that will satisfy anybody, and impossible to produce one that will satisfy everybody. But as every Englishman is by education a critic, a selection is offered under the conviction that, however unsuitable they may seem to be, they will at least be suggestive, and with the proviso that they shall every one of them be remodelled according to the learner's own taste. He may eject any noun or verb, with or without reason, and substitute another which he likes better, or

which he thinks more suited to his own especial requirements. But the sentences must not be shortened, because it is by extending their range that we obtain the most useful models, together with greater accuracy and command of language.

It is in vain for a beginner to expect, in the first few days, to learn a large number of words, and to acquire also the power of using them.

Servants and tradesmen, who have to prepare themselves for a special and well-defined narrow sphere, are generally more successful at first than educated men. The latter are too ambitious by far. In their efforts to speak a whole language with freedom and purity all at once, they are aspiring to an accomplishment which is seldom attained, except by thoroughly educated natives; and they also attempt it on wrong principles. The superfluity of words is sufficient of itself to paralyse them. Every word that they hear or see is a straw, the weight of which, individually, is as nothing, yet the whole bundle is too great for the strongest memory.

Those who have only to speak to one foreigner, on one subject, are in the most advantageous position, because they can easily anticipate their own wants, and draw up a set of sentences which they must use, or may use, several times every day. This compulsory repetition of the sentences

which have been committed to memory, is invaluable.

Some definite limitation of the sphere of conversation is essential. There need be no apprehension about its being too contracted, because there is no pursuit in which the range of expression is not wide enough to include the whole of the constructions, and to afford opportunities for the employment of every case and tense of the nouns, pronouns, and verbs. It is not extensive knowledge that is required, but readiness in using what we already possess; not power, but rather dexterity. There is less merit in speaking well, after a long and laborious course of study, than in doing so with little or no training; and there is more cleverness in making two hundred words subserve all the purposes of life, than in employing the whole dictionary.

In the selection and formation of sentences for a beginner, each of them should contain about twenty words.

The best sentences and words are those which the individual learner will have most occasion to employ in his first intercourse with foreigners.

Interrogative sentences are most required.

Negative questions are valuable, because they generally comprise the affirmative form of expression.

A beginner must not aim at brevity.

Circumstantiality is of infinitely greater value than conciseness. Brevity and strength of expression are excellent in those who have attained a high degree of proficiency; but intelligibility, and a free command of words must first be attained.

Complicated sentences are on no account to be avoided, or postponed; they are more instructive than simple ones.

Sentences, wherein the words correspond with the order of arrangement in the learner's vernacular tongue, must not on any account be presented to him at first. The preference should be given to those in which the order is most inverted.

Antithetical sentences are good, because they give scope for the introduction of conjunctions; but it should be remembered that two short sentences coupled together, are only short sentences after all.

It is better to learn a comprehensive sentence, which grasps within itself the substance of six other forms of speech, than to obtain six methods of expressing one idea.

Those every-day expressions in the learner's own language, which cannot be represented except by special idioms in the foreign tongue, ought to be provided for among the first.

Individual words are not to be excluded from a new sentence because they have previously occurred. Such repetition is unavoidable, and, as it facilitates the work, it is unobjectionable.

Strictly synonymous words are to be avoided.

Words of general applicability are to be preferred to those of restricted or partial meaning.

Plural nouns which are formed by merely adding a syllable to the singular, should be employed in preference to the latter.

The learner must not trouble himself by anticipation about the irregularities of verbs and nouns; because each tense and case will come to him by degrees. They ought not, on any account, to be excluded from the sentences on the one hand, nor ought they, on the other hand, to be studied, or even looked at in a grammar. A word of that class, standing in a sentence, is as easy as any other word, but if many anomalous forms are scrutinized, and more especially if they are exhibited in an alphabetical list, together with others nearly resembling them, the inevitable result will be confusion of mind, whenever any one of them has to be used.

Of verbs the active transitive is the best, and the most necessary tenses are the past and the future, together with the imperative mood, and the participles.

The passive voice may generally be dispensed with at first. In some languages it is scarcely ever used.

Compound tenses, being comprehensive, are extremely useful. The Latin word *rogavissemus*

is in itself a sentence, which presents to the eye the minor forms of *rogavissem, rogavisse, rogavimus, rogavi, rogamus, rogas,* and *roga.* It also comprises the various notions which in English are expressed with greater precision by the auxiliaries 'might,' 'could,' 'would,' and 'should.' To a beginner, therefore, it is doubly comprehensive. Elliptical forms of speech appear to be powerful and comprehensive in their relation to other languages in one point of view, but they are vague and defective in another. Our translation of *rogavissemus,* owing to its uncouth orthography, is viewed as a bungling circumlocution. But inasmuch as it contains the same number of syllables, it is equally concise; and in point of utility and convertibility it is superior; for whereas the Latin syllables are unalterably fixed in one sequence, ours may be transposed; and thus we obtain the advantage of the interrogative and conditional modes of expression in addition.

At the first view of a new language as exhibited in its cabalistic characters, its dictionary and its grammar, the labour of learning it appears to most people to be overwhelming. But a child is not appalled by any considerations of the magnitude of the undertaking. He cheerfully sets to work to make an epitome, and he always succeeds. His discrimination of the practical is surprising. His stock of phrases indicates to us that it is only

by limiting the number of nouns, that we can effectually circumscribe the area of our operations, and still set in motion the whole machinery of a language. For that which is said concerning a noun, in a well-chosen sentence, is of far more value to a beginner, than a list of many other nouns, to which it may be applicable.

The practice of learning a number of nouns every day, and of rehearsing them with their several English equivalents annexed, is very irrational. It is not the power of naming, but that of predicating that we want. For this purpose, the minor parts of speech are perpetually required, and the structure of language cannot be reared without them. They are often more influential than the noun itself, which is constantly superseded and merged in its representative pronoun. Nouns, when isolated, are not ideas, but fragments of dismembered sentences. Connected speech should be the sole aim and object of the learner.

The question "What do you call that?" forms an efficient substitute for the names of those things, which being always at hand, can always be pointed out. Those nouns, unfortunately, are the words which we are generally advised to learn first; the assumption being that what we see before us, is more easily associated with a new sound, than a thing which is not in sight.

It is deplorable to hear educated men argue, like mere savages, that the proper course is to learn the names of things first, because by naming them we can ask for them; as if the great object of our intercommunion with foreigners was to beg from them, and nothing more. We do not imagine the learner to be an adventurer, shipwrecked on a coast where civilization is unknown, and the language of which has never been heard by Christian ears. In such an emergency, a list of edibles would be very desirable, and he would easily obtain one by making signs; but the difficulty of expressing any ideas would remain in full force, after he had learned the name of every article in a cannibal's possession; and this knowledge after all would be of no avail to save him from an uncomfortable destiny.

It is often maintained that because nouns and verbs seem, etymologically, to be the foundation of all the other parts of speech, and because infants often learn them first, adults ought to begin in the same way. But this is not the infantile, but the maternal process. It is not spontaneous learning, but artificial teaching; it does not pretend to be philosophical or scientific; and there is no intelligible method pervading it.

A child four years old, left to his own resources, begins very differently. When he associates with foreign children, he does not restrict

himself to single words, nor does he pick out the nouns and verbs, but he learns practical sentences, and that without the intervention of any adviser. Here is the domain of instinct; but the mere infant is not a free agent.

Science investigates the origin of language, and sets us to work upon certain principles, according to which each language is supposed to have been formed word by word, thoughtfully and elaborately.

But seeing the difficulty experienced by some men of the greatest sagacity and industry in attempting to learn foreign words, even when sounded in their ears, and placed before them in writing, we are not bound to concur in the assumption that so noble, perfect, and wonderful a work as the invention of language, could have been accomplished by uncivilized men, who had never heard speech before they commenced their operations, and who must have been lower in intellectual degradation than the lowest of all the tribes mentioned in history.

Whatever its origin may have been, each language appears before us now, as an *opus operatum*, a highly-finished piece of mosaic, which children do not pull to pieces, though the learned do. Every learner is set to work to reconstruct the language *de novo*, with all its defects and anomalies included; and he naturally imbibes the notion that it is impossible for any one to become possessed of

it, unless he goes through that course. He is compelled to re-originate it for himself, as if all the labour, and experience of all his precursors were of no avail, except to prove to him that he must follow the track of those philosophical barbarians, whose footsteps have been effaced by the tramplings of a thousand generations.

Verbs and nouns are unduly exalted by teachers. They are supposed to be the most useful parts of speech, because they can do a little duty unsupported. But when deprived of any of its members, speech halts and staggers like a drunken man. Grammarians, in dissecting a language, necessarily treat each part of speech separately; but that is no reason why we should not learn sentences of a good length coherently, and analyse them afterwards.

In a simple language the whole of the pronouns and articles, and all the commonest conjunctions, prepositions, and interrogative adverbs, may be, and ought to be, introduced into the first set of sentences; because through them we express all those relations of time, place, quantity, &c., to which we incessantly refer in the every-day affairs of life. There can be no question as to the admissibility of these; but the choice of the other words required for the formation of a set of initiatory sentences becomes more and more difficult, in proportion to the narrowness of the sphere to

which the learner designs to confine his operations. If his view does not extend beyond a shabby smattering, the difficulty of selection is extreme. On the other hand, the facility increases with every score of words which may be added to the programme.

In some languages, such as English, Chinese, and Hindustani, the whole of the inflections come within the range of the first set of sentences. In others, the inflections alone amount to a much higher number. The difficulty arising from this profusion of forms may be best obviated by limiting the nouns and verbs. The grammarian gives us one noun and one verb, as specimens of each declension and each conjugation; and beginners, who undertake highly inflected languages, would work more scientifically and successfully, if they would "master" those samples first. But still better would it be to restrict themselves, in their first efforts, to six or eight nouns, all of one gender, and one declension; to the article of the same gender, and to three or four verbs all of one conjugation.

If nouns have five or six cases, the addition of a new declension should be made by inserting five or six nouns, each in a different case, into one new sentence, and then interchanging them. If a preposition governs two or three different cases, it should be exhibited with its different powers,

exemplified in one sentence. In like manner if a pronoun, or any other very common word has three or four different meanings, it should be treated in the same way; in combination perhaps with one or two parts of a verb of a new conjugation.

A limitation of the greatest importance may be effected by excluding from the sentences the nominatives of three of the personal pronouns; and thus, for the relief of the beginner, reducing the verb to one half of its bulk. The selection of the three most useful pronouns must be determined according to the genius of the language. In English, *I*, *you*, and *he* are much more necessary than *thou*, *we*, and *they*; but the English verb has so few inflections, that all the pronouns may be learned in the first hundred words.

This exclusion of half the pronouns is not altogether arbitrary, for it is analogous to the subsisting limitation in narrative composition, from which the first and second persons, both singular and plural, of the pronoun and the verb, are banished, together with all colloquialities and familiarities of speech. This accounts for the inutility of book-knowledge, unmitigated by some more practical course of procedure.

To carry out simplification to the utmost,

while endeavouring to "master" the declinable articles, nouns, and pronouns of a highly inflected language, it would be advantageous to use only three verbs at a time, all of one conjugation, and to limit them to the third person singular of the past tense. The verb then forms a pivot on which the sentences revolve with more smoothness than they would if the beginner had also to take thought about the tense and person to be employed on each occasion.

The epitome of all languages, as spoken by children, whether natives or foreigners, is essentially the same. The greatest diversity will be found in the nouns substantive which they employ, because different objects surround them in different countries, conditions, and degrees of civilization. No set of nouns, therefore, can be universally useful. The pursuits, necessities, tastes, and habits of travellers are widely different from one another; and there are countries in which our commonest articles of food, and many of what we call the necessaries of life, are altogether unknown. An arbitrary dictation of nouns being therefore inadmissible, every learner should choose a set for himself. But, on the other hand, the same set of verbs is universally employed; and these, of course, are indispensable in every land for the beginner. The most useful are those relating to motion and transmission, because they bring into active

operation a variety of prepositions. The remaining materials of the universal epitome will be found in those two or three hundreds of words which are most frequently employed in common conversation.

A language thus learned in miniature may seem, at first sight, to be miserably defective; but a vast reduction of labour is effected by this plan, and it creates great facility for the beginner in supplementing all his deficiencies.

Each sentence ought to be linked with its successor by having some word in common with it. Those who take pleasure in artificial aids to the memory may make a tree of any language, by writing their first sentence, containing twenty words, in the middle of a large sheet of paper, perpendicularly, to represent the stem, and by throwing out laterally from each word, a branch sentence, containing either that word, or else one very obviously connected or contrasted with it. The ramifications may be extended day by day, until the tree attains to large dimensions; but its greatest utility would be in determining, by the concurrent experience of several individuals, what sentences and words are the most really useful for the guidance of all beginners.

The genders might be made to alternate in uniform succession in every sentence; or each side of the tree might be devoted to one gender; or

else the higher, the middle, and the lower parts might be severally allotted to nouns of the three genders.

The nouns and verbs should be coloured or distinctively marked, both in the tree and in its vernacular translation; so that, when practising oral composition, the beginner may discern at a glance the declension or conjugation to which they severally belong, and may employ the appropriate terminations with perfect confidence. In sooth, the "scarlet conjugation" and the "blue declension" are terms not less suitable than the technicalities now in vogue.

On such a tree, the addition of a number of nouns would only represent so many more leaves. They would increase the subjects of conversation, but they would not produce any augmentation of the power of framing idiomatic combinations.

The gradual formation of such a tree on paper, exactly represents the growth of a language in the mind of a child, or of any one who learns to talk without the use of books. But in one case the tree is trained and pruned, and has its fruit thinned, in order to improve its quality; whereas the natural, uncultivated plant is often encumbered with a mass of foliage, which interferes with its productiveness, and checks the rapidity of its development.

CHAPTER VII.

ON FLUENCY AND LEARNING BY ROTE.

THE great desideratum is to be able to speak like a native; that is, to attain the power of employing the whole of our acquisitions so as to exhibit facility in composing, and fluency in uttering, complete idiomatic sentences of a good length. This is generally regarded as the finishing achievement of a long course of study, though it is strictly elemental. It is at once the simplest and the highest attainment. It does not require a previous study of the grammar. It is not a Herculean labour, except when the energies are misdirected. In fact, it affords no scope for the intellectual athlete to display his powers, because it is effected by the simple process of learning by rote.

In spite of the authority of Locke, in favour of learning all languages, including Latin, by rote, the practice has fallen into great disrepute, the

abuse having been generally accepted as a valid argument against the rational use of it. It is the plan dictated by nature to children; and it is by pursuing this course that they obtain idiomatic purity of expression, together with fluency, and accuracy of intonation.

The beginner who adopts this method, learns a sentence of which the purport alone has been communicated to him. He echoes the sounds, as uttered by one of the aborigines, until he has "mastered" the pronunciation and intonation, as accurately as those who have lived for six months among them. By the same effort he secures the idiom.

The construction of the sentence being studiously concealed from him, under the mask of the free translation, he does not know which of the new sounds, or how many of them, belong to each word, and he can form no idea of the meaning of any one syllable.

This ignorance is his safeguard in respect to pronunciation; for, if he understood the words, he would infallibly employ the peculiar intonation, the accents, the cadences, and the emphasis of his own language, because they have become habitual to him, and he has been taught that there is but one rational and logical mode of uttering a sentence.

When he learns a foreign sentence by rote, he

intercepts those trains of thought which involuntarily spring from the habit of analysing every word, of comparing it with all those which resemble it, either in sound or spelling, whether in his own or in other languages; and of pondering over genders, numbers, persons, cases, tenses, declensions, conjugations, etymology, syntax, and prosody. Such excursions of thought are not merely useless, but positively obstructive, because they employ the imagination and the reasoning powers, where they are not required; they crowd the memory with fanciful associations, which only produce confusion and perplexity; and they divert the attention from the pronunciation, to fix it on the spelling and the etymology.

When sentences are analysed and parsed; before the true sounds have been learned thoroughly, every word has to run the gauntlet, as above described, and very few of them escape without incurring such maltreatment that they cannot be recognised in their native country. The right order of the words is also forgotten and lost.

But when the beginner keeps his reasoning powers in abeyance, and his imagination under control, until he can utter the first sentence with a good intonation, as if it were only one long word, he puts himself on the same vantage-ground as a child, and he gains, by dint of imitation and

reiteration, the power of using one practical and purely idiomatic form of speech, and of accurately pronouncing that combination of sounds ever afterwards.

The meaning of each word and the construction of the sentence may then be explained to him, together with the minor combinations which it will yield, and then he may give the reins to his classical imagination without incurring any risk.

This is a deviation from routine, and a reversal of the usual order of procedure; but it omits nothing essential, and it does not offend against the law of reason. The scholar learns by rote, but he learns rationally and intelligently; he saves time and labour; he gains at the outset an intelligible pronunciation; and he familiarizes himself, without an effort, with all the ordinary constructions. He also keeps his head clear, because his memory has only to revert to a limited number of idiomatic expressions, over which it soon exercises perfect control, instead of traversing a sphere of extensive reading in pursuit of words of which it can retain only a confused, inaccurate recollection, and then linking them together in a manner quite at variance with the foreign idiom.

In learning by rote he commits words to memory with extreme precision, in their established order. The only wonder is that so

obvious an expedient has met with so much obloquy, seeing that poetry is always learned by rote, and that the true constructions, delivered with fluency in the true intonation, and in the true idiomatic order, constitute all the essentials of speech.

To frame grammatical sentences in a foreign tongue demands a very severe effort on the part of those whose memory is burdened with unconnected words, and with technical rules relating to them; because they are compelled to have recourse to deliberation when it is the time for action. But to interchange words already arranged in their proper tenses, cases, and sequences, in a few select sentences learned by rote, to frame other sentences precisely similar to them, and to utter them without hesitation in idiomatic form, are attainments within the power of a small child. Some there are who contend that the intellectual powers of man are in the habit of soaring to such lofty heights that they are incapable of descending to the level of childhood; but this method shows how they may be held in check, and rendered quite harmless to their owners.

The practice of writing exercises is a sorry substitute for oral composition, because it confirms slow people in slow habits. Fluency in using foreign words is not called forth, and can never be attained by a process so deliberate as that of

writing. It is useless to walk one mile an hour, as a training for a great pedestrian feat. Fluency in the vernacular tongue is rather mechanical, than intellectual; and it may be developed by well-directed efforts, even in people who seem to be naturally deficient in it.

It is very common to hear a man who has never worked in the right way, and who has therefore failed in his attempts to learn a language, maintain, with a semblance of humility, that he labours under a special disability in regard to this pursuit. But if a mariner will steer to the West, when he ought to shape his course to the East, he cannot expect to reach his port, until he has gone completely round the world.

There are some men who, if they could utter amongst their friends such language as they employ in their letters, would be regarded as brilliant speakers; yet in conversing even on the most trivial subjects, they speak with extreme hesitation and difficulty, because they do not exert the requisite urgency upon themselves. They know an immense number of choice words and phrases, classical and poetical, but they deliberate about them while they are talking. The proof of this is, that they express themselves very readily and very perspicuously when they are not thinking about words, that is when they are in a hurry, or are otherwise excited; but on other occasions they

leave this power unexercised, and in fact repressed. Such men, and their admirers, regard fluency in a foreign tongue as an unattainable accomplishment, or as the result of a special faculty, which few possess. But it may be attained even by those who possess it not in their own language, if they will confine themselves to a small range of words, and practise oral composition, until they can construct complete sentences more rapidly than they can utter them.

It would be idle to discuss those miserable excuses for hesitation of speech, which people alternately proffer to, and accept from one another. Fluency is found among both the silliest and the cleverest people, and intrinsically it is worthless; but as the want of it indicates that the foreign words have not been thoroughly digested, it must be adopted as a criterion, because it forms the only incontestible proof of daily colloquial progress.

The distinctive characteristic then of this scheme, is perfect fluency in producing every sentence which may be expressible, whether directly or indirectly, by transposing and interchanging the words which have been learned by rote. Confidence and self-possession are inspired from the very outset, by the conviction that every sentence which the beginner delivers, is exactly what

an educated native would employ, and that it is also an unexceptionable model for the formation of new ones.

Whatever he attempts to say to a foreigner is to be cast, if possible, in the mould of one of the model sentences. He must speak with confidence, not with the hasty, slovenly, timorous manner of the schoolboy. As accuracy is infinitely better than rapidity, every sentence which he tries to frame must be thoughtfully constructed up to the very last word, and carefully considered before he begins to utter it. Promptitude will follow in good time. Coughing and making strange noises during the delivery of a sentence must not be tolerated: these are but puerile devices to cover the defects of the memory, and to gain time to rummage the brains for a forgotten word.

At school we acquire the habit of stopping short in the middle of a sentence to deliberate about a doubtful word, and this meditation generally resolves itself into guessing. We do not gainsay the tentative hypothesis of science; but guessing at words is utterly inadmissible, because it is directly antagonistic to that precision which is the first essential in language. Guess-work is the source of innumerable ludicrous mistakes. It is at once a fraud and a self-deception;—a crime and a blunder. If the right word will not come to the lips the instant it is required, a fictitious one

may be employed with the foreign termination appended to it; and afterwards a circumlocution may be used to explain it, if necessary, to the astonished foreigner. If the sentences which he has learned have been often recited aloud, there can be no reason why the speaker should not be free from all embarrassment in uttering them, even in the presence of a large auditory.

Hastiness and its concomitant, hesitation, are the deadliest foes to fluency and self-possession; but there is a certain urgency which we must exercise upon ourselves in speaking foreign languages. It compels us to employ those practical sentences which we know, instead of striving to diversify our forms of expression, by recalling words over which we have not obtained absolute "mastery" and control.

It is said that Mithridates dispensed with interpreters, and spoke face to face with the people of more than twenty different nations over whom he was the ruler; but it is not recorded that he gained his celebrity as a linguist by hard reading. In those days the study of manuscripts was neither delectable nor fashionable. He probably picked up each language, as the courier of the present day does, by learning by rote a limited number of practical sentences, which were daily addressed, under the like urgency, to the strangers who came

before him, which were heard with acclamation by his courtiers, and which gradually expanded under the law of evolution.

This scheme unites to the knowledge of a few words the power of using them, which is of infinitely higher value to the traveller than the knowledge of many words without that power. The book-system fails, because it disunites them. Those who have merely learned to translate and to analyse foreign books cannot help perpetrating the barbarism of connecting words together in accordance with the forms of their own language. But that indolent habit of translating English sentences *verbatim*, must be energetically opposed and suppressed. The more words people learn incoherently, the more they become confirmed in the habit of translating literally from their vernacular tongue; because they have less difficulty in exchanging word for word, in the order in which they suggest themselves. Hence it happens that hard readers fail, while those who have learnt nothing but a few sentences, are compelled to remodel the ideas which they wish to express, in order to adapt them to those combinations; and they are thus prevented from translating servilely into the foreign tongue. The paucity of words, therefore, is converted into a positive advantage of the highest order.

When a learner translates a passage of a

foreign author, little or no attention is paid to the fact that the context enables him to guess the meaning of many words, and thus delusively gives him the appearance of knowing them all. But this method provides against the possibility of any such delusion, because books are forbidden at first, and the real knowledge of the words and constructions is indisputably proved by the fluency exhibited in employing them in idiomatic combinations.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRONUNCIATION.

A CORRECT pronunciation is the first and most essential consideration in speaking foreign tongues.

It cannot be expeditiously attained, except by carefully imitating, in other words, by repeatedly echoing the tones of a native's voice in the utterance of a few syllables, and by observing the movements of his vocal organs.

The course usually followed is a slovenly, irrational attempt to exact from the vocal organs, the duty of producing, by the aid of the eye and the memory, sounds and tones which can only be recalled by those who have acquired them. Recollections of unfamiliar, non-natural sounds are so evanescent, that they cannot be relied upon for five minutes. Persistent imitations of a few sounds should, therefore, be carried on, not

continuously, but for about ten minutes at a time. Four such lessons in a day produce far more advantageous results than one long hour's repetitions.

Some teachers of languages have an indistinctness, a roughness, or a dissonance of voice, which completely baffles the imitative power of the learner, and places him in a most disadvantageous position. A clear, soft, refined, and deliberate utterance should be considered indispensable in teachers; because all their tones, accents, emphases, and cadences are to be imitated and adopted. It is quite unnecessary to employ a professor. A foreign friend with a pleasant voice will do the work as effectually, and much more agreeably. There is no better exercise than mimicking the voices of children who speak accurately, and echoing in particular the final syllables. In every case, to copy nature is the true course.

It is generally supposed that a musical ear is a necessary qualification; but there are excellent linguists who have not a particle of music in their souls, and amongst great musicians there are some who pronounce foreign tongues very badly, and some who will not attempt to do it at all. It is not by the ear, but by the vocal organs, that the work is done; for every child living with foreigners pronounces their language to perfection, unless he

happens to be deaf. The "lordly savage" has a fine ear for a distant footfall in the forest; but this gives him no advantage either as a musician, or as a linguist.

Our habit of pronouncing Latin and Greek leads us far astray as linguists, because the sounds, and the tones in which we read them, are not foreign, but indigenous; and thus we are misled to Anglify the pronunciation of other languages also.

It is a great mistake to try to pronounce one syllable or one vowel sound independently: because the separate sound is often quite different from that which it yields when in combination. For the same reason, individual words ought never to be separately practised.

Another error, ruinous in its effects, is to learn in company with other beginners, because none but the pure, genuine sounds should be heard at first.

In echoing the pronunciation of short sentences, the three last syllables should be uttered first; then the four last; then the five last; and so forth, as in the legend of "The House that Jack Built;" which is a master-piece for exercising foreign children in pronouncing English.

It is well known that people who have spoken a foreign tongue in early childhood, but have afterwards forgotten every word of it, generally have the power of regaining the pronunciation at the first effort. This is a great advantage, because when

they resume it, they require nothing but a set of written sentences, with their variations and translations; and they are exempt from that threefold confusion of mind, which others experience from the uncertainty that cleaves to the spelling, to the sound, and to the meaning of each word committed to memory. It is for the purpose of avoiding that triple confusion, that reading and spelling are interdicted in this scheme; and the memory and understanding have so little given them to do, that the attention can be concentrated on the pronunciation.

When we learn our first lessons, we are apt to think that if we remember the spelling of the words, and can write them correctly, we have, at all events, retained the substantial part; and that the correct sounds and tone may be attended to afterwards. Sounds may be deemed immaterial and unsubstantial when compared with letters, which are rendered palpable objects by means of paper and ink; but the words of a living language are nothing but sounds. Sounds are the substance; and the letters, or symbols, are their shadows. Beginners are very apt to lose the substance by snatching at the shadow.

The whole of the sounds of any language may easily be included in fifty words; and it is unpardonable to commit them to memory in a manner in which they ought not to be uttered.

Pronunciation is a purely mechanical operation. When the vocal organs are placed in a certain form, certain results follow. If they are not placed in that form, those results cannot be obtained. To sound M and P, the lips must be brought together; to sound V and F, the upper teeth must touch the lower lip, and it is impossible to utter them without observing these rules.

The Chinese remark that Englishmen talk with their lips; while neighbouring nations object that we talk without using them. Our language does not require either the mobility of the latter, or the immobility of the former; but we can attain them both by perseverance.

It often happens that there is no gradual approximation to the right pronunciation of a new sound. By chance it may be uttered aright at the first, at the twentieth, or at the fiftieth attempt; but after all, the habit must be acquired, and this can only be formed by reiterated imitation. On the other hand, people may fail after many earnest endeavours; but the only cause of failure is, that the organs have not been put exactly into the right position. Beginners who are unsuccessful should closely observe the vocal organs of those foreigners who speak most energetically, and have the greatest degree of mobility of countenance.

Some persons volunteer to call themselves very

"stupid" about pronunciation, forgetting that the operation is one which calls forth no exercise of mental power, and that it can only be attained (even by the cleverest people) by means of the unintellectual process of parrotry.

The less reasoning that is brought to bear upon the sounds, when they are first uttered for imitation, the better chance will there be of success. When they are actually acquired, reason may and will assert her rights; but then there will be nothing left for her either to do or to undo, in this respect. The difficulty of analysing foreign sounds is freely acknowledged by those who have studied the subject most carefully, and therefore the learner should not loiter to theorize about them.

Every tribe, having a language of its own, has some peculiar tones and some movements of the vocal organs, which the learner has to discover and adopt. It is therefore instructive to watch, very narrowly, the manner in which our own language is uttered by a foreigner; to mark the tones, to note what words he mispronounces, and to echo those tones and sounds.

The beginner may likewise derive advantage from echoing his teacher's voice in reading Latin prose, for this will not only be of advantage to him in his immediate purpose, but it will also qualify him to pronounce Latin intelligibly when he travels abroad. The latter object is worth the

trouble of five or six hours' practice at first, and ten minutes a day afterwards.

By reading a comedy aloud, in company with a man from Somersetshire, Kilkenny, Kirkcudbright, or Carnarvonshire, a foreigner may acquire whichever of those dialects may be deemed most desirable; and so those provincials, by reversing the process, may, in like manner, attain the genuine foreign tone by assiduously mimicking his voice in return.

When the learner first pronounces one of the new sounds correctly, he generally succeeds with others closely following it, because the vocal organs happen to be in the right position. This sudden success should therefore be promptly and vigorously followed up, and not one word of his own language should be interposed, lest the organs should relapse into their wonted and natural position.

As there are some combinations of letters, in which a sound is more easily attainable than in others, the beginner should exercise himself with various words, containing that sound which he finds the most impracticable. When he has discovered one in which he can pronounce it successfully, he may revert to those which baffled him before; but it is a waste of time to carry on a long struggle with one unyielding word.

The teacher's office is not to be a sinecure.

He is never to sit listening, and correcting his pupil while reading aloud. This is mere charlatanry. During the first two months, whatever progress may have been made, at least three fourths of each sitting should be devoted to imitations of his utterance. He ought, therefore, to be a good reader.

Although there may be only three or four new sounds to be learned in a new language, there is a foreign tone which pervades every utterance. This intonation is far more important than the power of imitating each individual sound; and therefore efforts should be made to acquire it as soon as possible, on a small scale. For this purpose a few questions, of six or eight syllables each, and containing none of the peculiar sounds of the foreign tongue, should be frequently echoed every day, without being translated, or analysed, or studied. But the principal object of each day's work should be to obtain a perfect intonation and pronunciation of the short lesson of the day. This course is far more effective and rational than that of learning sounds to day, and trusting to the ear, the eye, and the memory to reproduce them to-morrow.

Some persons live almost exclusively among foreigners for many years, and listen very hard, but yet miss the mark after all, solely through the want of imitation, systematically conducted. But it is never too late to try again. Beginners who pronounce well, and who are said to have a good

ear, utter the sounds correctly at the first effort, and of course reproduce them with ease. Many owe their success to their having imitated, perhaps only for a few minutes, and then perhaps unconsciously, the tones of some congenial voice. There are voices which impress their stamp on the listener, in tones that never cease to be reverberated.

An Englishman generally seems to imagine that he can pronounce other tongues, without deviating from his habitual mode of using his vocal organs. He thinks it indecorous to make faces, and ridiculous to utter unusual sounds; yet the mouth must be opened, sometimes very wide; the throat must be distended; the pitch of the voice must be altered; and instead of pronouncing one syllable of every word with emphasis, while others are suppressed and half-smothered, he must employ a sustained articulation, so that every individual syllable shall be equally audible. This last exercise ought to be practised in reading English aloud, for five minutes every day, as a prelude to a lesson in the pronunciation of a foreign language.

Apart from loudness, there is a certain vehemence of utterance required for some languages. It is necessary to observe and cultivate this, because if the natives are compelled to make a vigorous effort to utter the sounds, we cannot possibly do so without still greater exertion.

There is in most people a feeling of trepidation

at the sound of their own voices, which operates very much to their disadvantage in speaking foreign tongues. This feeling may be overcome by daily reading some poetry in their own language in a very loud voice, and very slowly, taking care that not a syllable shall escape unheard, or be slurred over, in violation of the rhythm. When they have thus reconciled themselves to their own voices in very slow utterance, they will not tremble to hear them uttering foreign sounds.

In pronunciation, the force of habit is great, and it is well exhibited in that struggle that we go through in attempting to throw off the conventional artificial tone, in which we are taught to read in childhood. A very long series of careful exertions is required, before we can read uniformly in the natural tone. But this paradoxical effort to be natural, as we know to our cost, is in most instances unsuccessful; and although we universally express so much intolerance for bad reading, the evil is constantly augmented and even aggravated by bad examples.

It is easier to learn to pronounce a foreign language than to correct a vicious mode of uttering our own tongue. And it greatly conduces to such correction to practise a foreign intonation, even without exercising the memory at all in retaining the words. The pronunciation of the mother tongue may then be improved by echoing the

colloquial tones of a good voice for two or three hours a day, and by inaudibly following and constantly observing the cadences of good speakers engaged in reading, or in casual conversation.

In learning a foreign intonation we have not to modify our habitual mode of utterance, but rather to substitute another that is altogether different from it. Yet whether we are learning something quite new, or unlearning and contending against inveterate habit, the instructions may all be resolved into two words—"persistent imitation."

CHAPTER IX.

ENGLISH.

THE English is a very composite language; and yet, in the simplicity of its constructions, it is unrivalled amongst the languages of Europe. In this respect it is particularly suited to the natural method of learning foreign tongues.

It is said to be deficient in euphony. But this scarcely deserves a thought, because the softest language loses all its melody when spoken in dissonant tones, and the harshest may be listened to with pleasure by the most fastidious ear, when uttered by a clear, soft voice. It is, therefore, of great importance that the teacher should possess that qualification.

In speaking English, foreigners must abstain from loudness, from gesticulation, from opening the mouth wide, from guttural and nasal sounds, and from all vehemence of utterance. The voice and

the movements must be as subdued as those of the teacher from whom they receive the pronunciation. They ought carefully to observe that peculiarity which results from our laying emphatic stress upon one syllable of each word at the expense of the others.

The converse of these rules must be observed by an Englishman learning a foreign tongue. He should work himself up to be as animated as his preceptor; as loud, as vehement, as gesticulative. He must not shrink from drawling out the long sounds, nor from opening his mouth wide, and expanding his throat.

There is one English sound, and only one, which calls for remark, because it defies the efforts of all those who are not taught how to place the tongue while endeavouring to produce it. It is represented by two sign-posts, T and H, which only mislead the beginner by pointing in two wrong directions. The sound is made by dwelling on the letter S, or hissing for twenty or thirty seconds, during which the tongue must be gradually brought into contact with the upper front teeth, and slightly advanced beyond them. A variation of the sound is produced by buzzing on the letter Z, and advancing the tongue in the same manner.

The erroneous impression that English is a very difficult language has arisen chiefly, or

perhaps solely, from the mischievous practice of exposing beginners to the dangers and difficulties of our orthography. This is a fortress which is far too strong to be taken by a sudden assault, and it must therefore be masked at the beginning of the campaign. In other words, the learner must not see, nor must he even imagine, the spelling of one word, until he has gained the colloquial "mastery" over one hundred.

The simplicity of the language will be acknowledged when the paucity of inflections is seen in the table at page 166. Many of the verbs are on the following small scale, viz., *cut, cuts, cutting.* Another class has four forms, as *look, looks, looking, looked.* And the largest class has five forms, as *speak, speaks, speaking, spoke, spoken.* The auxiliary verbs, by which the various compound tenses are framed, have altogether only twenty-five forms.

Nouns have only one case, the genitive, which, in most instances, is identical with the sign of the plural number.

Pronouns have a genitive and an accusative case also.

The dative and ablative cases are unknown, except in the adverbial nouns, *here, there, where;* which have for their datives, *hither, thither, whither;* and for their ablatives, *hence, thence, whence.*

The syntax, as given by Dr Johnson, contains only five rules, which are exemplified in the following

short sentence;—"Your friend's brother wishes us to go with him." The constructions are so simple that any educated man may learn the whole of them in one sitting, and compose similar sentences with perfect ease.

When a grammatical difficulty occurs to a foreigner, let him remember that *language* takes precedence of *grammar* in this scheme, and that the scientific solution of a puzzling question is of no importance, when compared with the power of employing the constructions correctly. After he knows the language, he may give his whole life to the study of grammar.

Some writers inconsiderately maintain that ours is the natural and logical order of arranging words in sentences; but every other nation likewise regards their own as the most natural and rational. The people at the Antipodes think that our order should be reversed, and they are quite as competent to judge as we are.

In like manner Englishmen try to persuade the Chinese that our system of writing sounds is simpler and more rational than theirs; but when the numerous discordant uses of the letter A are explained to the Mandarin, he is as much and as justly amazed at the ignorance of his teachers, as they are at his. Italians or Germans would have some show of reason if they recommended their orthography; but we have none.

There are some truths, which it is deemed indecorous to state in plain explicit terms. It is necessary therefore to crave the forbearance of the reader, for the remark that English has never been considered worthy of being studied by other nations, as a vehicle for conveying instruction in the science of grammar. It is utterly unfit for that purpose, and let foreigners therefore beware of wasting one moment on the study. There is a scantiness in the syntactical forms and inflections, which renders the grammar intensely difficult. The science of grammar was invented by men who spoke and wrote two highly complicated languages, Greek and Sanscrit. But Latin was found to be the most suitable medium for illustrating the science in Europe; and its grammar, although in many respects inapplicable to other languages, and totally unsuitable to some, is adopted as the universal model. Thus our grammars of the Chinese language are full of information which is incomprehensible to the most astute and accomplished Mandarin. The grammarians enlarge in technical terms on moods, tenses, persons, cases, concord, government, &c., although these have no existence either in the Chinese language, or in the imagination of the people. Logic and metaphysics are called in to contribute to the explanation of the mysterious science; but without illustrations drawn from foreign languages, containing

exemplifications of the principles propounded, grammar must continue to be a most unintelligible study. English is almost as simple in its constructions as Chinese, and the study of its grammar can only be an impediment to a foreigner who wishes to learn the language colloquially.

But although the constructions are so few and so simple, and although the inflections are on so small a scale, the efforts of beginners will be frustrated, unless they acquiesce in the restrictions suggested, but especially in this, that the colloquial attainment must precede all study of the written language. When the object of the learner, however, is *solely* to read our literature, the course to be pursued is altogether different. On this subject let him refer to the chapter on Book-work.

Annexed is a list of the commonest words of the language, both declinable and indeclinable. Four of these, on an average, will be found in every line of an English book, and in every colloquial sentence containing a dozen words. This list is not to be learned by heart, nor is it intended to be used in any way by the beginner. Its object is merely to shew which are the most essential words in all languages, in order that they may be introduced into the sentences which are to be translated and given to beginners. There are no nouns included in the list, because it is for the learner himself to select and insert those which

he will have most occasion to use at first. It may be said that the list contains merely what all grammars exhibit; but this method prohibits the use of grammars and all other English books at the outset.

Some sentences have been given on page 165, from which, with the aid of an interpreter, the foreigner is to make a selection for his own use, altering them, or enlarging them, or substituting others for them, according to his own convenience, but never reducing them in length.

The synopsis of the language is to be kept open before the learner, to help him to any case or tense which he may require, when he attempts to compose variations of those sentences which he has committed to memory.

A LIST OF THE COMMONEST ENGLISH WORDS,

DECLINABLE AND INDECLINABLE.

A, an	but	I	not	still	upon
about		if	now	such	upper
after	Directly	in, into			us
again	down	instead of	Of	Than	
ago	during	it	off	that	Very
all		its	often	the	
almost	Each		on	their	We
alone	either	Large	only	them	well
also	else	last	or	then	what
although	enough	lest	other	there	when
always	every	let	our	therefore	where
among	except	like	ours	these	which
and			out of	they	while
another	Far	Many	over	this	who
any	few	me	own	those	whole
as	first	mine		though	whom
at	for	more	Perhaps	through	whose
away	forward	most	Quickly	to, till	why
	from	much	quite	to-day	will
Back		my		together	with
because	He		Rather	to-morrow	without
before	her	Near		too	
behind	here	neither	Several	towards	Yes
below	hers	never	she		yesterday
beside	him	next	since	Under	yet
best	his	no	slowly	unless	you
better	how	none	some	until	your
between	however	nor	soon	up	yours
beyond					

Am	came	Find	Is	Saw	stopped
are	can	found		seen	
	can't		Made	selling	Taken
Be	come	Given	makes	sends	telling
been	couldn't	going	may	sent	told
being		gone	might	shall	took
bought	Did		must	shan't	
bringing	do			shouldn't	Wanted
brought	does	Had	Ought	showed	was
buying	doing	has		shown	won't
	done	have	Procure	sold	wouldn't
Called	don't	having	putting		

One	five	nine	twelve	twenty	fifty
two	six	ten	thirteen	thirty	hundred
three	seven	eleven	fifteen	forty	thousand
four	eight				

SAMPLES OF SENTENCES

CONTAINING FROM TWENTY TO THIRTY OF THE COMMONEST WORDS.

Why did you not ask him to come, with two or three of his friends, to see my brother's gardens?

Can you let me have a sitting-room on the first floor at the front of the house, and two bed-rooms on the second floor at the back?

Send this letter, if you please, to No. 15 West street, and tell the messenger to wait for an answer.

When the man who brought this parcel for me yesterday evening calls again, give it back to him, and tell him that this is not what I ordered at the shop.

Tell the porter to call me at half-past seven o'clock to-morrow morning, and to bring me a cup of coffee and a jug of hot water.

Will you enquire at what hour the earliest fast train starts for Windsor, and whether there is an hotel at the station where it stops?

Let me see the bill of fare and the list of wines, that I may order dinner for a party of four, whom I expect to arrive here this evening at a quarter past six.

Ask your groom what it was that he received through the little window of the horse box when the train stopped at the Stafford station?

Take this back to the shop, and say that I don't like the colour, and that I will call again the next time I come up to town.

Ask him what has become of the books which he promised to send me last week, before I started for the sea-side.

Where can I procure some cigars of the same sort as those which you bought for me at Genoa, when we met there six months ago?

If I had not met your servant in the street, I should not have known that you had returned with your family from Spain.

PARADIGM OR SYNOPSIS,

SHOWING THE VARIATIONS OF THE COMMONEST DECLINABLE WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

I	me	my	mine	
He	him	his	his	
She	her	her	hers	
It	it	its		
We	us	our	ours	
You	you	your	yours	
They	them	their	theirs	
Who	whom	whose		
	This, these.	That, those.		
Take	takes	taking	took	taken
Have	has	having	had	had
Do	does	doing	did	done
Want	wants	wanting	wanted	wanted

Be, being, been.

Am, is, was, were.

Can, could. May, might.

Shall, should. Will, would.

Large, larger, largest.

Person, person's. Persons, persons'.

CHAPTER X.

TELOOGOO.

THIS ancient language is supposed to have been introduced into Hindostan by Scythian tribes, before the arrival of the Brahmins, who gradually drove them down to the southward, where they now occupy a territory of nearly 100,000 square miles, in the Madras Presidency, with a population of about 15,000,000 souls.

The language is very different in its forms from those of Europe, and it is classed in the Turanian order.

How to utilize that minute knowledge of Latin and Greek which we acquire in the most valuable decade of our little lives, is a point not much regarded by teachers of modern languages. The methods are generally supposed to be antagonistic and irreconcileable. It is possible, however, to put languages in apposition to each other, by means of

translations into Latin and Greek, and to graft foreign terminations on familiar words, so as to explain peculiar constructions without having recourse to a grammar. Venerable prejudices will be shocked; but the extreme torture to which Latin has been put by the Hamiltonian system shall be carefully avoided. In that scheme, as applied to the colloquial acquisition of modern tongues, the *ne plus ultra* of error has been attained, inasmuch as the idiomatic order of the words is remorselessly sacrificed.

In Teloogoo every word ends with a vowel, an arrangement highly conducive to euphony. A question is asked by changing the final vowel of a word or of a sentence into ā. Have they returned, or have they fallen? would be rendered Rediērā? Cecidērā? But when a question begins with an essentially interrogative word, as "Who," "when," or "where," the final vowel is not changed into ā. So quis, quando, &c., do not accept the assistance of "an" or "ne."

Emphasis is bestowed on a word by changing its final vowel into ē. Thus to the question foregoing, Cecidērē, non rediere would be a fitting reply.

Doubt is expressed by changing the final vowel into ō. Thus Rediērō, cecidērō, would mean I do not know whether they have returned or fallen.

The letter N is often inserted for euphony's sake, as in Greek and English. Thus, Fluvionā? prælionā? Was it in the river, or in the battle that they fell?

There is a past participle which in Latin is only found in deponent verbs as fatus, egressus, &c. It is formed, as it were, by removing the last syllable from viximus, duximus, &c., retaining the short sound of the second syllable. In translating the following words: "He reigned for twenty years, led his armies into remote countries, lived to a great age and died childless,"—each clause would end with a verb, and they would stand thus: Rexĭ, duxĭ, vixĭ, obiit. Two verbs cannot be united by a conjunction, and therefore this participle, which is indeclinable, is always on active service, absorbing the conjunctions employed in English and Latin.

When the syllable tē is added to the same participle it absorbs the conjunction if. Thus, Nos legitē, if we read.

When the syllable nă is added to it, it absorbs the definite article, and the relative pronoun in all their cases. Thus, I did not see the book which you sent, Tu misĭnă librum non vidi. He will keep the letter which I wrote, Ego scripsĭnă epistolam retinebit. I do not know the name of the town to which they came. Illi venĭnă oppidi nomen nescio.

Another relative participle is similarly employed to indicate present and future time.

The tenses in common use are only two, the present which does duty for the future, as when we say, "I am going to-morrow;" and the perfect which is the past participle above described, with various terminations affixed thereto.

The third person singular has two distinct terminations; one masculine, the other feminine and neuter. In the third person plural, however, women share with men the honours of the first termination, while the second is only used with neuter nouns. So the Greeks employed both ειστιν and εστιν in the plural.

There is a declinable verbal noun, the want of which is awkwardly supplied in Latin and Greek by the infinitive mood, and in English by the present participle. Under the mystical appellation of gerund, the passive participle is pressed into the service in Latin, to obviate that difficulty of expressing the cases which the Greeks overcame by means of their declinable definite article. In active verbs, this form retains its transitive power; and although declinable throughout as a noun, it is not used in conjunction with possessive pronouns and adjectives, but with personal pronouns and adverbs. Thus its force as a verb continues unimpaired. Its termination is "dum;" a fact

which may perhaps suggest reflections to the learned.

There are negative forms of the verbal noun, the imperative mood, and the relative participles above mentioned. There is also a negative aorist, which is framed, not by the addition of a negative particle, but by the pretermission of the affirmative affix, which intervenes between the root and the distinctive personal terminations of the present tense. It is worthy of notice that these terminations are affixed to the personal pronouns, as well as to the verb, and therefore they are, in their nature, distinct from the pronouns.

The Teloogoo paradigm inserted at page 184, gives a remarkable series of words in the first three columns. The monosyllables at the head of each list severally represent "this," "that," and "what;" and the words placed below them, indicating time, place, quantity, person, and manner, are for the most part declinable representatives of our adverbs "here," "there," "where;" "now," "then," "when," &c. The advantage of having them presented to the learner, so that each of these words forms a clue to two others, will be manifest at the first glance.

In Teloogoo the conjunction *and*, when coupling two substantives, is used doubly, like the Latin *que*. When it is affixed to *who*, and followed by a negative verb as "Quisque nequit," it signifies "no

one can." "Quidque agere nequeo" means "I can do nothing at all." When added to the number "two," it signifies "both." When added to "three," "four," or any other higher number, it means "All three," "All four," &c. The omission of the conjunction in such phrases is not allowable.

Many Sanscrit nouns substantive ending in *um*, are freely employed; and in these the last syllable is liable to elision, as in Latin verse. In like manner, the final vowel of one word is sometimes merged in the initial vowel of the next word.

There are two forms of the pronoun *we*. One is dual, including the person or persons addressed. The other is the editorial and imperial "We." The latter is always used by Europeans, and by the great men of the land; but it is inadmissible when the speaker includes the person addressed. The first-mentioned form seems to have sprung from the institution by which property is held in common by a whole family; so that the words *meum* and *tuum* cannot be employed without giving offence. The North American tribes have a similar form of speech; but it is not clear that they ever enjoyed a despotism which predominated over *meum* and *tuum* so effectually, as to merge them both in a singular *nostrum*, and thus to render a distinctive dual or plural form essential to the peace of all undivided families.

A servant or dependant always uses the singular

I when he addresses his master. It would be insolence on his part to use the royal *We*. In speaking to men of good position, the constant repetition of the word *thou* is distasteful to them; but if their official superior always addresses them in the plural number, it is liable to be misconstrued as a symptom of subservience on his part. There is no other form of address, because the idea of equality is not expressible, being neither admitted nor understood. The safe course for an official, is to use the plural number freely and promiscuously, even to ordinary people; or else to employ the singular invariably in public. It is more courteous to drop the singular when it can easily and naturally be avoided; but it is very difficult to extemporize the requisite circumlocutions, and a beginner cannot fail to shackle himself by attempting it.

Punctuation is not required in Teloogoo. The verb is the last word in every sentence, and every clause; and the order of the words is very much inverted. In the translation of an English letter, the final verb of the first sentence is converted into a participle, which receives some conjunctive affix equivalent to *as*, *since*, *although*, *when*, *where*, &c., and it is thus united to the second sentence. By this arrangement the divisions of the subject are marked in a manner which, though perfectly lucid to the Oriental mind, is extremely fatiguing

to those who are accustomed to the luxury of having points to regulate their breathing. Many of our countrymen exhibit great intolerance for forms of thought, and expressions, which are so much at variance with our classical models. And there are few who submit, at first, with a good grace to the practice of connecting different sentences together by means of links, which the languages of Europe do not possess.

This reluctance to adopt Oriental forms of thought must be overcome at the outset, by learning long sentences, containing as many of the antagonistic forms of speech as possible. If the beginner affects conciseness he will find himself in this predicament, that orders addressed to Hindoos, with great consideration for the grammatical proprieties, will be imperfectly understood, because they are deficient in circumstantiality. He must divest himself of the habit of omitting every word which may, either classically or logically, be deemed superfluous. Those standards are altogether inapplicable in the East. By attempting to practise economy of time, the beginner may save two or three seconds; but there may be a great expenditure of temper incurred in expounding his own oracular phraseology, or in witnessing the miscarriage of a project through the misapprehension of the person addressed.

There is a pedantry in employing superfine

book-language in speaking to illiterate foreigners, whose thoughts run in very different channels from our own. On the other hand, it is an egregious mistake to descend to the lowest dialect, in order to render our speech more intelligible to the vulgar. This is an error which is generally defended and inculcated by the indolent, who have never risen to a higher attainment. The learner's object should be to make himself universally intelligible; and for this purpose the pure and simple Teloogoo is the best.

To be intelligible to the Hindoos, we must accept facts as we find them. In Europe certain signs and gestures are supposed to be natural and universal; but if we beckon to a Hindoo, he retires; and if we reverse the signal, he approaches. Even the dogs misunderstand us; for the Hindoo snaps his fingers as a menace and a hint to withdraw; but English dogs put a different interpretation on the movement, and so the Brahmin incurs defilement by his own act.

There are no words in Teloogoo corresponding to Yes and No. It is therefore unclassical and illogical to insist upon what we call a categorical answer. It is equally absurd on our part to employ, indiscriminately, the words which most nearly correspond to Yes and No. They signify "There is," and "There is not." Numerous are the misunderstandings that arise from the proud defiance

with which Englishmen trample upon the laws of the language, and then impute stupidity, with a stupidity still greater, because less excusable, than that of the uneducated servant. In some parts of Ireland, the people are as abstemious as the Hindoos in the use of Yes and No. The correct answer to a question requires the use of the verb: Have you heard? I heard it yesterday. Do you want? I want. Did he send? He sent. The indolent response "There is," completely bewilders the questioner. The necessity for attending to this peculiarity from the very beginning, is obvious enough.

It is necessary to discard every interjection and exclamation to which we are accustomed in English; and to bear in mind that it is not safe to translate anything literally into Teloogoo. It is better to say to a servant "Hear," than "Here." Instead of "Go and see," we must say, "Having looked, come." Instead of "Go to your dinner," it must be "Having eaten your dinner, come." The Hindoos omit the going. We omit the coming. And this omission in Teloogoo may lead to a long absence on the servant's part.

There are no adjectives corresponding to *ullus* and *nullus*, nor is there an adverb precisely corresponding to *non*, because the negative aorist takes the part generally performed by that word. There are two different substantive verbs signifying There

is not, and It is not. The former relates to mere existence; the latter to quality. These give rise to very precise distinctions. The correct use of these words in Teloogoo demands an exercise of thoughtfulness which, if applied to the collections of fallacies exhibited by Whately, Mills, and other writers on Logic, would form a valuable combination of the study of Grammar with its sister science.

Among the Hindoos the word *speak* or *say* is constantly superseded by the words *command* and *submit*. Every word of the great is an order; every word of the inferior is a submissive representation, or prayer. The circumlocution department of the language will be found very extensive; but there are also many gems of concise and elegant phraseology.

The greatest source of confusion to beginners attempting the colloquial part, is the absence of certain active transitive verbs, which seem to us to be indispensable. There are no words which correspond exactly with *have*, *want*, *like*, *love*, *find*, *meet*, *see*, *understand*, *bring*, and *take away*. These constitute obstacles which some people never completely overcome. Passive and neuter verbs, or circumlocutions, are employed to express those ideas. *Have* is disposed of as in Latin. "Have you a house?" "Is there a house to you?"

Instead of saying "Did you meet the Rajah?" the Hindoo says "Did the Rajah come opposite to you?" or "Has he passed along this road?" For "Have you seen any camels?" he says "Have any camels appeared to you?" For "Have you found the book?" "Has the book been found to you?" or "Has it appeared to you?" For "Do you understand?" he says "Is it known to you?" For "I want some fruit," he says "Some fruit must be to me." For "I don't like that," he says "That is not agreeable to me." "Bring dinner" is expressed by "Having taken the dinner, come!" "Take away that," is "Having taken that, go!" The notion that in seeing, understanding, &c., we are passive, is here shadowed forth in the language.

When foreigners speak unintelligible English, we are prone to make merry with them, rather than to condemn ourselves for our ignorance and inability to fathom their meaning. But when the scene is reversed, our ideas are reversed, and we are dissatisfied with the luckless wight who cannot understand his own language, when burlesqued both in phraseology and intonation.

There is sometimes such a total disregard of pronunciation among Englishmen, that their Teloogoo is utterly useless to them. Quantity,

quality, and intonation are sacrificed, for the sake of a rapid delivery in reading and translating examination papers.

It is necessary to bear in mind that every vowel sound remains uninfluenced by the consonant which succeeds it. Whether it be long or short, the pronunciation is uniformly the same. The stress is always laid on the long syllable, and the duration of the sound is not merely nominally, but actually equal to that of two short syllables. When a short vowel comes before two consonants, it attracts one of them to itself to form the first syllable, and the voice rests upon it long enough to give time for the intermediate utterance of another short syllable. This gives the true quantity and rhythm to perfection. In the recitation of Latin verse, such words as *pocula* and *litera*, do not receive justice in respect to the time occupied in uttering the first syllable, because in accentuating a syllable we generally make it extremely short. Such mispronunciation in Teloogoo involves a series of false quantities which, combined with false pronunciation, renders the words unintelligible. Schoolboys are taught to give two different sounds to a vowel to show that they know the prosody, and then the duration of time is violated with impunity. We utter all our dissyllables like the trochee, or the pyrrhic; but we never pronounce two long syllables so as to form

a spondee. Hence the impracticability of English hexameters.

Our poets make monosyllables either short or long in English; but in speaking we give them a very short sound. We also make some vowel-sounds so extremely short, that three of them would not exceed the duration of one long sound in Teloogoo. This clipping of the sounds is quite opposed to the measured modulated utterance of the Hindoos.

A careful separation of syllables is essential. The Teloogoo word for "antelope" is "lady:" but the first syllable is fully three times as long as we pronounce it, and then the sound of D begins. If we pronounce the word in our accustomed way, making the first syllable "laid," it is incomprehensible to a Hindoo. His orthography, being phonetic, leaves no scope for guess-work, or imagination. Ours, on the contrary, is so full of vagaries, that we are prone to indulge in the conceits suggested by innumerable grotesque similarities amongst words differently spelt, and startling differences between those which resemble each other in sound or spelling. Our training, moreover, being chiefly analytical and critical, we find it hard to believe that the Hindoo cannot understand a sentence of his own tongue, which we would readily submit to the scrutiny of a Board of Examiners. Nevertheless the

fault cannot possibly be on his side, when he is puzzled by the words of his own language; and therefore it behoves us to look to our pronunciation.

The enunciation of the people is very distinct, and there are no harsh or difficult sounds in the language. They have no vowel sounds which are foreign to us; but there are some of ours which are foreign to them, and which we must therefore scrupulously eschew. These are the vowel sounds in "mat," "war," and "lot." The third is the short sound of the second, but as a safe-guard, it is better to treat them as three separate rocks on which we are sure to strike, if we imagine the English spelling of the Teloogoo words.

Many Englishmen are unable to discriminate between the dental and palatal sounds of T, D, N, &c. The palatal is formed by turning the tongue upwards and backwards, and the dental is attained by bringing the tongue in contact with the upper front teeth, and advancing it a little out of the mouth, before pronouncing the consonant. It may be practised in English by uttering words beginning with T or D, but not TH. Great care must be taken not to aspirate the sound. After ten minutes' practice, the peculiar effect produced will, perhaps, become perceptible to the learner; but whether he can detect it or not, he need

not be discouraged; because he cannot fail to utter the right sound if he puts his tongue in the right place. The habit of keeping the tongue always ready to touch the front teeth, before uttering the dentals, must be acquired as soon as possible. By observing this rule, and by studying a very deliberate articulation of each syllable, a good pronunciation may be rapidly attained.

The Dravidian languages so closely resemble each other, that this sketch of Teloogoo will form an introduction to them all. To the general reader, who will glance at the sentences, it will show the intrinsically different character of those languages as vehicles of thought. To the young officer destined for the public service in South India, it will show the advisability of adopting the child's method, in order to overcome, one by one, those difficulties to which a multitude of his predecessors have reluctantly been compelled to succumb, in consequence of their endeavouring to grapple with them all at once.

A few samples of sentences are annexed, marked with figures, to show the manner in which the words are arranged in Teloogoo. They relate only to subjects upon which an Englishman must necessarily communicate with the natives, and which he ought therefore to have on the tip of his tongue. The Teloogoo sentences are given in the

English character, the vowels being marked to indicate the pronunciation, in the following manner:

ă	as in	America	ŭ	as in	pull
ā	„	star	ū	„	rule
ĭ	„	in	ĕ	„	pen
ī	„	magazine	ē	„	there
ŏ	„	potato	eĭ	„	height
ō	„	groan	ăŭ	„	cloud

PARADIGM

OF THE

COMMONEST INFLECTIONS IN TELOOGOO.

ĭ	ă	ĕ-ĕmĭ
ĭdĭ	ădĭ	ēdĭ
dĭnĭ	dānĭ	dēnĭ
dĭnĭkĭ	dānĭkĭ	dēnĭkĭ
dĭnnĭ	dānnĭ	dēnnĭ
ĭvĭ	ăvĭ	ēvĭ
vĭtĭ	vātĭ	vētĭ
vĭtĭkĭ	vātĭkĭ	vētĭkĭ
vĭtĭnĭ	vātĭnĭ	vētĭnĭ
ĭkkădă	ăkkădă	ĕkkădă
ĭppŭdŭ	ăppŭdŭ	ĕppŭdŭ
ĭtădŭ	ătădŭ	
ĭntă	ăntă	ĕntă
ĭndărŭ	ăndărŭ	ĕndărŭ
ĭnnĭ	ānnĭ	ĕnnĭ
ĭndŭ	ăndŭ	ĕndŭ
ĭtlā	ātlā	ĕtlā
ĭvătălă	ăvătălă	ĕvătălă
vĭdŭ	vădŭ	ĕvădŭ
vĭrŭ	vărŭ	ĕvărŭ
vĭndlŭ	văndlŭ	ĕvvăndlŭ
ĭyănă	ăyănă	ĕyănă
ĭmĕ	āmĕ	

nēnŭ	nĭvŭ	tānŭ
nā	nĭ	tănă
nākŭ	nĭkŭ	tănākŭ
năннŭ	nĭnnu	tănnŭ
mēmŭ	mĭrŭ	tāmŭ
mā	mĭ	tămă
mākŭ	mĭkŭ	tămākŭ
mămmŭnă	mĭmmŭnă	tămmŭnă
	mănămŭ	
	mănă	
	mănākŭ	
	mănămŭnă	

ŭnnănŭ	āmŭ
ŭnnāwŭ	ārŭ
ŭnnădŭ	ārŭ
ŭnnădĭ	ăvĭ
ŭndĭ	
tānŭ	tāmŭ
tāwŭ	tārŭ
tādŭ	tārŭ
tŭnnădĭ	tŭnnăvĭ
tŭndĭ	tŭnvĭ
ĭnānŭ	ĭnāmŭ
ĭnāwŭ	ĭnārŭ
ĭnādŭ	ĭnārŭ
ĭnădĭ	ĭnăvĭ
ĭndĭ	
tĭnĭ	tĭmĭ
tĭvĭ	tĭrĭ
ĕnŭ	rĭ
ŭnŭ	ŭrŭ
	ŭnŭ
ŭ	dāmŭ
ūmŭ	dămŭ
mĭ	ăndĭ
ă	ŭtŭnnă
ădămŭ	ŭtŭ
ŭtă	ĭ
ēdĭ	ĭnă
	ē
ănŭ	ămŭ
ăwŭ	ărŭ
ădŭ	ărŭ
ădĭ	ăwŭ
ămĭ	ăkŭ
ănĭ	ăkăndĭ
ăkă	ăkŭndā

lĭ	lălŭ	vă	vălŭ	mŭ	mŭlŭ	mŭ	ālŭ
lĭ	lălă	vă	vălă	pŭ	mŭlă	pŭ	ālă
lĭkĭ	lălăkŭ	vākŭ	vălăkŭ	mŭnăkŭ	mŭlăkŭ	ăvĭkĭ	ălakŭ
lĭnĭ	lălănŭ	vănŭ	vălănŭ	mŭnŭ	mŭlănŭ	ănnĭ	ălănŭ
		dŭ	dŭ	lĭ	rŭ		
		dĭ	nĭ	lĭ	tĭ		
		dĭkĭ	nĭkĭ	lĭkĭ	tĭkĭ		
		nĭ	nĭ	lŭnŭ	rŭnŭ		
				lă	tă		

TELOOGOO SENTENCES.

1. Nī ăjāgrătă wăllă yī vēlă wūdīănă mēmū săwārī vēllădānăkū
lōkă pōyĭndī gănăkă mā gūrrānnī lāyămn lāk tīsūkŏnī vēllămănī
gūrrăpūvānĭtō chĕppū.

1. Tell the horse-keeper to take away my horse to the stable,
because by your carelessness I have been prevented from going out
to ride this morning.

2. Nīwū cărnĕl dhŏrăvārī băsăkū twărāgă părĭgĕttī nīnnă tĕllăwārĭkī
vādălŏnūnchī dĭgĭnă dhŏrălălō yĕvărălĭnā mā pĕrătă wūttărālăĭnā
mūtălăĭnā tīsūkŏwăchĭnārō lĕdō tĕlūsūkŏ rā.

2. Run thou quickly to the Colonel's house, and inquire whether
any of the gentlemen who landed from the ship at daybreak yesterday
have brought letters or parcels for me or not.

3. Ā dhŏrăvārū mēmū pămpĭnchĭnă wūttărăm nī dăggĕră tīsūkŏnī
rēpătĭkī tāmē wăstāmănī shĕlūvĭchĭnăndūkū vārū yĕ dōvānū wăstārō
ădĭnnī yĕ vēlăkū wăstārō ădĭnnī nīwū yĕndūkū ădĭgĭnāwū kāwū.

3. When that gentleman received from you the letter which
I sent, and said that he himself would come to-morrow, why did you
not ask by which road and at what time he was coming?

CHAPTER XI.

HINDUSTANI.

THIS language is spoken all over India as a *lingua franca.* There is so great a variety and latitude in its pronunciation, that no one can fail to speak it intelligibly. In this respect, as well as in the simplicity of its constructions, it affords an excellent subject for an experiment in "mastering" a hundred words, with very little exertion.

One characteristic of the language is, that the terminations ā and ī are used to represent the masculine and feminine singular; and ē to represent both genders in the plural number of verbs, as well as of substantives, adjectives, and possessive pronouns. Thus the learner is saved from the perplexity arising from the diversities of terminations which are to be found in other languages.

There is a genitive affix which varies according to the gender of the noun following it. Thus, the Rajah's son, the Rajah's daughter, and the Rajah's houses, would be translated Rājākā, Rājākī, and Rājākē.

There are several series of words, relating to time, place, quantity, &c., which represent now, then, when, here, hither, there, thither, where, whither, &c. The initial letter of each being distinctive, facilitates the acquisition of the whole range.

The tenses are formed with beautiful simplicity, and there are only three irregular verbs in the language.

The nouns have a genitive, a dative, and an accusative case, but the two latter are identical. In neuter nouns the nominative is employed as the accusative, without assuming the affix. Postpositions supply all the other contingencies in which nouns are employed.

All the constructions will be found exemplified in the appended sentences, with the exception of one anomaly, which need not be learned at first.

The beginner is not to look at the synopsis until he has mastered a hundred words; but after that, he may study it as much as he pleases.

HINDUSTANI SENTENCES.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
1. Sūnō—ăgăr ūnkē bhāī ājkē rōz chār ghăntēkē ăndăr tūmkū
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
nēn mĭlē tō ūskū būlābhējkăr ūssē pūchhō kĭh āpkā dōst bānātā
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
sō chīzkā nām kyā hăī ăūr ūskā khărīd kĭtīnā hăī.

1 2 10 11 12 12 3 4 5—6 9
1. Hear! if you do not find (or meet) their brother to-day before
7 8 15 16 14 15 17 16 25 26 24 23
four o'clock, send for him and ask him what is the name of the
23 22 19 20 21 27 30 31 28 29
article which his friend constructs, and what is its price.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. Tūm hămārā ghărkū jăldī jākăr wŏh năūkăr săndūk mēn
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
rūkhā sō kāghăz ăūr dō kĭtābōnkū wāhānsē măngākăr Bāndăr mēn
20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 29
hăī sō păltănkā Major sāhĭbkē pāss jāhāz păr bhējnēkē wāstē tăyār
30
kărō.

5 4 3 2 3 5 17 16 16 12
2. Go quickly to my house, and procure from thence the paper
13 14 15 11 6 7 10 9 8
and the two books which that servant placed in the box, and
30-31 .....28 29..... 27 26 23-24 22 22 21
prepare them to be sent by ship to the Major of the Regiment which
20 10 18
is at Bunder.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Nădīkē ūstărăfsē ĭss khătt lēkăr āyā so ădămīkū būlākăr ūssē
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
bōlō kĭh āj shāmkū sādē sāt ghăntēkū Jay sāhĭbkē pāss hăm jăwāb
23
bhējēngē.

9 8 7 5-6 3 4 2 2 2 1
3. Call the man who brought this letter from the other side of
1 1 9 11 10 12 21 23 23 22 20 19 18 17
the river, and tell him that I will send an answer to Mr Jay at
.....15-16..... 17 13 14
half-past six o'clock this evening.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
4. Isskē sĭwāī jăb tūmkū khăbăr mālūm hōtā hăī kĭh ūnkē lāshkăr
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
ūss gāōn mēn pāhūnchā hăī tăb Adjutant sāhĭbkā ghōrēwālēkē pāss
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33
jākăr ūssē pūchhō kĭh hăm Sadras mēn khărīd kīyē sō ghōrā kāhān
34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45
hăī ăūr wāhānsē kăb nĭkālā hăī ăūr ĭtnē dĭnōnkē dēr kĭss săbăbsē
46 47
hōwī hăī.

2 1 3 4 6-7-8 5 9 10 11
4. Besides this, when you receive tidings that their detachment
.....15-16..... 14 12 13 17 22 21 18-19
has arrived in that village, then go over to the Adjutant's
20 22 24 23 33 32 34 31 26 29-30 28
horse-keeper and ask him where the horse is which I bought in
27 35 37 .....38-39..... 36 36 ...40-44-45-41... 41 42
Sadras, and when he set out from thence, and why so many days'
43 .....46-47.....
delay has occurred.

HINDUSTANI PARADIGM,

OR SYNOPSIS OF THE TERMINATIONS OF ALL THE VARIABLE PARTS OF SPEECH.

măĭn	hăm	mărd	mărd
mērā—ī—ē	hămārā—ī—ē	mărdkā—ī—e	mărdōnkā—ī—ē
mŭjhkū	hămkū		
mŭjhē			
		kĭtāb	kĭtāben
		kĭtābkā—ī—ō	kĭtābōnka—ī—ē
tū	tŭm		
tērā	tŭmhārā—ī—ē		
tŭjhkū	tŭmkū	rōtī	rōtīyān
tŭjhē			rōtīyōnkā
		kŭttā	kŭttē
			kŭttōnkā
yĭh	yē		
ĭskā—ī—e	ĭnkā—ī—ē		
ĭskū	ĭnkū	gĭr	gĭrō
wŭh	wō	gĭrā—ī	ē—ĭn
ŭskā—ī—ō	ŭnkā—ī—ē		
ŭskū	ŭnkū	tā—ī	tē—ĭn
kōn	kōn		
kiskā—ī—e	kĭnkā—ī—ē	ōn	ēn
		ē	ō
jō	jō	ē	ēn
jĭska—ī—ē	jĭnkā—ī—ē		
		ōngā—ī	ēngē—ĭn
sō	sō	ēgā—ī	ōgē—ĭn
tĭska—ī—ō	tĭnkā—ī—ē	ēgā—ī	ēngē—ĭn
kyā	kyā	nā	kăr
kāhēkā—ī—ē	kāhēkā—ī—ē	nēkā—ē—ī	kē
kōī	săb	hōn	hăĭn
kĭsīkā—ī—e	săbhonkā—ī—ē	hăĭ	hō
		hăĭ	hăĭn
kŭch	āp		
kīsūkā—ī—e	āpnā—ī—ē	thā—ī	thē—ĭn

*** The *italics* indicate the nasal sounds.

For the pronunciation of the vowels, see page 183

CHAPTER XII.

ON GRAMMAR.

SOME knowledge of grammar is generally considered to be an essential preliminary to the attainment of a language; but there is no dialect that has not been acquired, and spoken in idiomatic form by foreign children, without such a preparation.

Cobbett, the grammarian, has proved very conclusively that grammar is extremely and almost hopelessly difficult of attainment; for he shows that English statesmen, whose eloquence had often elicited applause from the most critical assembly in the world, were guilty of errors, neither few nor venial, even in the studied composition of speeches to be delivered from the throne.

Regarded as a science, grammar is very deficient in exactitude and consistency, because it admits of many exceptions to its general rules;

and in its universal form it is so meagre and unpractical, that there is probably not a language to be found, in which some violation of its leading principles does not occur.

There is great ambiguity in the word "grammar." It is a Protean term, for which it is hard to find an unexceptionable definition.

In our great schools it is held to be the most effective, because it is the most complicated method of imparting by slow degrees a thorough knowledge of two magnificent languages. No attempt is made to teach boys to *speak* Latin and Greek. The avowed object is to exercise their understandings upon the structure of these languages. They are employed in the solution of difficulties in accordance with those principles with which they are supposed to be imbued in the first place, by learning the whole grammar by heart.

Grammar is not the art of teaching languages, nor is it the art of learning them, nor is it a device for simplifying the art of learning them, for no grammarian or lexicographer has so defined it; and yet, through some strange infatuation, this virtue is almost universally ascribed to it.

Incorrect language is generally called "bad grammar;" and thus the terms language and grammar are confounded.

Grammar originally signified merely the art of writing, and the study of written language.

During a long course of years it was generally defined to be the art of speaking, as well as of writing correctly. This definition is unique in respect to the last word; and it is very unphilosophical; because on the one hand *correctly* is precisely equivalent to *grammatically*, (which merely leads us back to our starting point,) and on the other, we meet with people quite ignorant of grammar, who nevertheless speak and write more elegantly than some of those who are conversant with the grammars of several languages.

Grammar is sometimes defined to be the law by which language is regulated; but in reality, grammar is deduced from language, and is not the regulator, but the regulatee. Locke defines it as "the art which teaches us the relations of words to each other." But whatever the true definition may be, there are hundreds of millions of men who have the gift of speech, and who pass their lives very pleasantly, without ever hearing of the "relations of words to each other;" and therefore it is clear that such knowledge is not essential as an introduction to the colloquial acquisition of any language. We also know that there are barbarous tribes who speak very complicated and highly refined languages which, till the present generation, never came into the clutches of a grammarian, and in which this recondite science has till now been nameless and unknown.

Grammarians endeavour to induct us into the art of constructing correct sentences by reasoning processes. But children construct them without any such training; and reasoning, when misdirected, as it generally is in this pursuit, obstructs our progress, because it perpetually recalls our attention to the forms of our own language, than which nothing ought to be more carefully avoided.

The most powerful reasoners are not the best linguists. On the contrary, they are often found to be very poor performers. But the reasoning faculty, when rightly directed, can never be an obstacle to our progress in any pursuit. It is only when we misapply it by diverging from the true course, that it fails us; and it is only from misguidance that men of education are defeated in this pursuit; the practical acquisition of language being postponed and made subservient to the study of grammar.

Grammars contain from fifty to five hundred pages of instruction; but so great is the awe in which the writers are held, that no one ventures to insinuate that there is any deficiency in the smaller, or any superfluity in those on the larger scale. But the short grammar looks very like a protest against elaborate explanations of points of construction, which are upon the level of the capacity of little children. And the preference for the shortest grammars, exhibited by those who are in

the habit of learning languages, implies the conviction in the minds of experienced men, that that study is merely a loitering on the threshold.

Whatever a grammarian thinks fit to propound concerning a language, is generally received as grammar. In expounding the principles on which the constructions seem to him to have been originally planned and instituted, it is his prerogative to philosophize without restriction, to frame rules at his discretion, and to cite examples *ad libitum* to illustrate them, together with exceptions to establish them.

But unfortunately teachers do not discern that the examples are in reality the laws, and that the syntactical rules are but corollaries drawn from them. They make grammar the paramount consideration, and treat the language as subordinate to it, and therefore we protest against them as unsuitable guides for beginners who are intent upon learning to speak the language.

When it is conceded that all that emanates from the brain of the grammarian is grammar, let it be noted that not one word of the language sprang from that source, and therefore that every word of his paradigms and examples belongs of right, not to him, but to the language from which he borrowed them.

It is essential to draw a clear line of distinction, not merely between the two words, but

between the two things, in order to satisfy the beginner who adopts this system that he is not omitting anything essential when he dispenses with a grammarian's assistance.

There may be a legion of grammarians, each with a sound method of his own; but the language of which they treat continues unchanged and uninfluenced by them. Each of them may excel his predecessors in some respects; but there is not one amongst them whose rules or opinions are necessary for the guidance of a foreigner, who is beginning to learn the language.

A modern grammar puts us into possession of all that is valuable in the researches of former grammarians, accompanied by the writer's own reflections, emendations, and additions. Words are classified, facts are stated, technical terms are employed and explained, and laws are framed, by means of which we are expected to reason about words and constructions. The various steps of the grammarian's own reasonings are not exhibited; but in the application of the grammar to the study of the written language, our teachers are supposed to conduct us to the same results, through the same course of investigation.

If, however, they do not fully understand that reasoning, or if they possess not the faculty of teaching, the principal object is frustrated. The rules being practically annulled by their exceptions,

the study bewilders and perplexes the understanding, and it becomes intensely wearisome, except when that interest is awakened which it is the province of the teacher to impart to every pursuit which occupies the attention of youth. When the reasoning powers, however, are baffled, when all interest has been lost, and harsh tyranny has intervened, no progress takes place, except in making a mere acquaintance with words and constructions; and the education is virtually suspended.

As there have been many teachers who could not appreciate, and were therefore quite incapable of carrying out, the objects of the classical course of study, it is no wonder that hundreds of educated men, having received in their youth no clear views on the subject, feel dissatisfied that their sons must be educated according to a system which produced such small results in themselves. They think that the time is wasted, because the close critical study of a language for ten years, does not qualify men to speak it, or at least to write it with elegance and freedom. They do not see that there is a great difference between studying, and acquiring a language. To frequent picture galleries in company with men of artistic genius, and to hear them descant, from day to day, upon the excellencies and defects of the finest works of art, is a course of study, by which the judgment and taste are greatly improved and developed; but it

is not painting, nor will it ever make a man a painter, unless he handles a brush and lays on colours. In like manner we study Latin and Greek for many years, but we are not led on to the ultimate "mastery" of them.

Foreigners wonder why we wilfully and habitually pretermit the practice of oral composition in Latin; and even our own countrymen, who, being accustomed to the phenomenon, ought to be able to account for it, are puzzled by the utter incapacity of some very good scholars in this respect.

Grammarians give us most abundant and minute information on every point connected with the languages which they respectively undertake to analyse and delineate; but it is not a part of their programme to qualify us to speak. They only provide that, when we do attempt oral composition, we shall be thoroughly furnished with the requisite materials and principles.

Grammar is the only avenue of approach to the scientific study of a language, because thereby alone can we appreciate and employ those technical terms which custom has sanctioned, and has now prescribed as essential for the philosophical analysis and discussion of words and constructions. The power of using technical terms is a necessary part of science, because it abridges discussion, and conduces to precision of speech. But the deepest thinkers complain the most loudly of the

inadequacy of words to produce an identity of thought between the writer and the reader. In bygone times, scientific men reasoned with no less force than the moderns, without the aid of many of the technical terms now in general use. The disadvantage under which they laboured was, that they were forced to express themselves more diffusely. Economy in the use of words is invaluable, but, in the instruction of youth, perspicuity ought not to be sacrificed for the sake of conciseness. When there is no clear appreciation of the technical terms of grammar on the part of the learner, time is lost, and progress is arrested.

Grammar is the scientific point of view of a language; but when we desire to learn it colloquially we must take the practical view also. The technicalities of grammar obstruct the learner's progress, because it requires, firstly, a course of study to understand them; secondly, of habituation to use them with facility; and thirdly, of thought and experience to apply them correctly. Grammar itself is at the same time a foreign language, and an extremely abstruse science. Uneducated people should therefore pass it by, when they want to speak a new language. But educated men, who already possess a good knowledge of grammar; must also abstain from the study, because they need only to receive Latin, Greek, and English translations of foreign sentences to qualify them to

understand, at first sight, all forms of speech which are analogous to those familiar constructions. Those anomalous forms, some of which baffle the subtlety of even the most learned men, ought not to occupy the attention of the beginner. The only sound principle is to adopt them first, and study them afterwards.

The most inexplicable idioms are employed with equal propriety by the child, and by the professor; and it is not less logical and philosophical to say, "What is the foreign word for *him?*" than to ask for the accusative case, singular number, masculine gender, of the third personal pronoun. Again: we may say, Translate "*Ye would have been flogged,*" instead of asking for the second person plural of the preterpluperfect tense indicative mood of the passive voice of the active transitive verb *to flog.* Science delights in the use of those twenty technical terms, but the plain questions are more intelligible and more practical now.

The interdict laid upon translations, and every kind of assistance to boys in our schools, betrays that there is a more direct way of becoming practically acquainted with the classical languages. However, no public avowal of this fact escapes from the lips or pens of our teachers, because they maintain the theory that knowledge which has been attained without the regular scientific course of study, is mere ignorance in disguise.

There is no disparagement of classical education conveyed in the declaration that a previous knowledge of grammar is unnecessary to fit us for the colloquial acquisition of any language, however complicated it may be. The study of Latin and Greek is a most admirable contrivance as an instrument of education, when a competent teacher and an earnest pupil are brought together. And this method, which shows how a valuable accomplishment may be gained by adults, without putting forth any intellectual effort, will be found to be quite in harmony with the classical course.

The priority which this scheme gives to the colloquial element changes the whole aspect of the question; because hitherto oral composition has not been the first, but the last step.

The strength of the classical system consists in the analytical examination of written language. The pupil is expected to show how the arrangement of the words, their orthography, their etymology, and their variations of case, tense, gender, number, and person, conform to that code of laws which grammarians have deduced from the usage of the best writers.

Grammar is the foundation of that system. It is a complicated contrivance for making language a scientific study. The pupil is expected to bring a clear and thorough comprehension of all the minutest details of grammar to his

analysis of the written language; and this process tests, while it is supposed to improve, his knowledge of grammar.

Latin is the instrument through which he studies grammar; while at the same time grammar is the instrument through which he studies Latin. But *studying* a language is not *acquiring* it; and there is no limit to the refinements of grammar. The study of that science as the instrument of acquisition being interminable, the acquisition itself is hopelessly deferred.

Amongst continental scholars, the power of speaking Latin is held to be an essential part of the classical course. An excellent plain style is often attained at an early stage, for they are not expected nor encouraged to employ oratorical language, and they do not affect it. The consequence is, that when they have occasion to speak before scholars of high classical reputation, they are in a better position, and are more likely to acquit themselves well, than those who have not practised oral composition at all.

The most obvious and convincing proof of a thorough knowledge of the anatomy of any language, is the exhibition of promptitude and precision in oral composition. Thus alone can it be ascertained whether a free command over all the constructions has become habitual. If it has not become habitual, and almost natural, it is of

comparatively little value. Written translations yield no conclusive evidence even of a good style of writing, because they afford time for the composer to deliberate, to revise, and to refer every word to some precedent. Style is the result of habit, and those who do not practise, cannot have a fixed style.

But oral composition finds no place in our classical education; and the custom is to practise the demolition and pulverization of sentences, with a view to the microscopic examination of each atom, and the rehearsal of the laws to which they are subject.

But some rules are obscure; and some constructions are inexplicable; and precedents are in conflict with each other; and there are some points respecting which the learned are at variance; and when the pupil misunderstands them, his foundation is unsound, and the superstructure must be unsightly and faulty. One fertile source of misconception and error, is the impression conveyed by the grammar that the language is perfect, being in exact conformity with the laws of pure reason.

However, when the whole of the rules are thoroughly understood by the learner, his intellectual faculties are beneficially exercised in dissecting, in classifying, and in generalising; in the use of technical terms, in the application of principles, and in the power of systematic investigation,

by logical analysis. At the same time he becomes familiar with the noble sentiments, and the sublime language of the great orators, poets, and philosophers of old. As it is needless to point out the benefits of such a course of study, so it would be absurd to call them in question.

But there are many people who have adopted the notion that the high attainments of our classical scholars, prove that their method and their course of study are the best for acquiring a modern language. They omit all considerations of the time required to carry them through such a course. They wilfully shut their eyes to that manifest and unquestionable superiority which is displayed by children in respect to readiness in the composition of *idiomatic* sentences; and they shrink from a comparison which shivers their theory to atoms, and exposes the futility of their endeavours to attain a colloquial use of a language, through the circuitous course of studying a very rough science.

Not knowing the process by which children learn to frame idiomatic sentences, people have recourse to one founded upon diametrically opposite principles. This being generally accepted as an improvement on the course of nature, has been adopted to the total subversion and suppression thereof. Theory has been permitted to take precedence of, and to preponderate over practice, almost

to its exclusion. Let the practical, therefore, assume its right position, and let theory be kept in due subordination.

Every rule of syntax is a generalization from a series of uniform expressions. It declares in scientific terms that the words appear in that specific form, for certain ingeniously invented reasons; but in reality the true reason in every instance is, that the usage of the language requires it. Usage is the only law. Usage constitutes the whole code. A rule merely enunciates a fact, which no prior reasoning on the part of a foreigner could possibly have discovered, and regarding which no ulterior reasoning can be of any avail. In syntax the rules are not connected with each other; the order of their arrangement is purely arbitrary throughout; and they do not form a chain of reasoning.

It is as easy to learn elegant as inelegant phraseology by heart; and the construction of new sentences, according to a model committed to memory, is an extremely simple operation even to the illiterate. As example is better than precept, let us discard the inferior article altogether. Let the beginner commit to memory some colloquial sentences, framed or selected so as to exemplify those laws of language which grammarians present to us under the denomination of rules of syntax. When the learner has proved his

intelligent appreciation of the principles on which the first sentence is constructed, by composing, with different sets of words, ten or twelve sentences precisely in accordance therewith, there can be no necessity for him to commit to memory the grammarian's scientific precepts. And if he will daily practise the composition of new sentences, precisely corresponding to each of the models which he has thus learned to copy, there can be no danger of his ever forgetting how to construct them.

Thus a practical command over a language, founded upon an accurate knowledge of its structure, may be gradually acquired, without the labour of learning any technical terms or formal rules; and the pupil who diligently exercises himself in oral composition, with the models engraved on his memory, and a complete paradigm of all the verbs, nouns, and pronouns always lying open before him, acquires the habit of expressing himself fluently and accurately, without looking into a grammar. Moreover, he shows himself to be in possession of the analytical process practised in our schools; because when he makes an intelligent application of his models, by fluently composing new sentences exactly corresponding to them, he surpasses his comrades in constructive skill, as far as he who can separate, and then reunite all the parts of a watch, excels those who can only take it to pieces.

Language existed long before grammar was invented, and the faculty of acquiring a foreign tongue by imitation, and of speaking it exactly as the natives do, is innate and universal in mankind. It is not a science, nor does it depend on the acquisition of any science.

The colloquial command of a living language is of the highest utility to a traveller, however ignorant he may be of scientific grammar; but the most profound knowledge of the grammar, without some practical command over the language, appears in many instances to operate as a disqualification for the colloquial attainment. This incongruous conjunction of profundity with incompetency, which is very common in England, is a stumbling block to beginners. One youth shrinks from undertaking that which has foiled his betters, while another is furnished with an argument against the introductory study of grammar, which his teacher overrules, and denounces in the most emphatic terms, although he does not and cannot refute it.

Grammar and logic have been called twin sciences, and the term is not inapplicable, because the difference between them is sometimes undistinguishable. As logic does not profess to endow us with the power of reasoning, but only to show us a process whereby we may acquire the habit of reasoning correctly, that is, according to rules

prescribed by logicians; so grammar "does not profess to endow us with the power of speaking," but only to show us how we may acquire the habit of speaking correctly, or according to rules invented by grammarians.

The definition of grammar as the art of speaking correctly, being generally accepted, has given rise to the tradition that it is impossible to speak a language correctly except by that study. Now the rules of syntax are drawn from certain sentences, and these are given as examples to prove that the rules have been logically deduced. The pupil first learns a rule, which is proved by examples, and then in the course of his studies he meets with the examples, which are proved in their turn by the rules. He then begins to see that he has only been galloping round a heavy course, and has come back to the starting-post.

The grammarian theorizes for our instruction in his science, and he gives us the materials for attaining a critical knowledge of the language. But a child obtains a practical knowledge of a foreign tongue without theorizing at all, and yet he unconsciously conforms to abstruse and scientific rules. Total ignorance of the science is no bar to his attainment of the most complicated language, and it need be no impediment to the progress of an adult.

The lovers of routine consider that it is very

contemptible to learn to speak a foreign language, without knowing the why and wherefore, and without learning to read and write. But in the first place usage is the *only* reason for every thing; and in the second place a free-born Briton is not to be coerced. He will not work more than is absolutely requisite, during a short pleasure-excursion; he will not begin a study which will cost him time and toil; nor will he be led by those who, though they can read and write to admiration, and have a profound knowledge of the grammar, yet have not the power of bringing their learning into practical effect in the most ordinary conversation.

But to resume the parallel. In reasoning, soundness is the main point; and in speaking foreign tongues, idiomatic diction. But soundness of judgment and idiomatic speech, are found in people altogether untaught. Logic and grammar instruct the beginner gradually in the art of detecting, by critical revision, the fallacies in his own reasonings, and the errors in his own compositions; but they do not, at the outset, help him to originate. He cannot reason and compose correctly, till he has gone through the prescribed course; and even when it is completed, his performances betray that he is not armed at all points.

To speak a language *correctly*, after a long series of laborious efforts in composing, revising, and

recomposing, is a very humble achievement, seeing that children accomplish it *per saltum*, and exceed it too, by speaking idiomatically. But to speak a language otherwise than idiomatically, is to speak it imperfectly. Now grammar, according to its usual definition, does not even profess to teach us to speak idiomatically; and we find some men, deeply versed in grammar, who speak very uncouthly.

But children speak idiomatically without learning any grammar, and as we have shown that adults may do likewise, we contend that the study of grammar is extraneous, and unnecessary for beginners, and that every correct sentence uttered by an uneducated man supports this assertion.

There are thousands of Englishmen who know the Latin and French grammars thoroughly, and can interpret the best authors, who are nevertheless incapable of speaking those languages, and who stand aghast when suddenly called upon to converse.

Experience shows that the power of composing colloquial sentences with fluency, does not spring from a thorough knowledge of grammar; nor from deep and extensive critical acquaintance with the best authors; nor from learning thousands of detached words by heart; nor from treasuring up choice passages from the poets and orators in the memory; nor from any or all of those combined:

and yet we daily see highly intellectual men, who are not insane in any other respect, preparing themselves for a continental tour, by a ruthless vivisection of the languages of Europe. They well know that this is not the right course, but they object to other methods, as being merely the old system in disguise.

On the other hand, illiterate people and children acquire the power of speaking the most difficult languages with fluency, by learning a very few practical sentences, and by ringing the changes on them. As speech is nothing but a succession of sentences, this is the natural and rational course. It is also the simplest and most effective. Children and imbeciles succeed, in spite of their ignorance of grammar and books; and highly educated men fail in consequence of their entertaining the delusion that a course of grammar, and familiarity with books, and an acquaintance with an unlimited number of words, are essential preliminaries. Hence it happens that the accomplished gladiator of the Imperial Circus is often defeated in his own arena by an untrained rustic.

The beginner, in whose classical education oral composition has not been practised, will meet with nothing but disappointment, unless he pursues a different course in learning a living language. When a man has committed to memory a few well selected sentences, each containing different

constructions, and has acquired the power of putting them together in all their variations, one rapid perusal of the grammar will suffice to convince him that he is already in possession of the whole syntax of the language. Then will that fluency in speaking foreign tongues, which is too generally allowed to be dormant, become rapidly developed within him; and together with the power of connecting words with exactness and readiness, he will attain that self-possession, the want of which strikes many Englishmen dumb, when they first have occasion to speak to foreigners.

The siege of Troy lasted for ten years, and our classical education often occupies a longer period; but the moderns generally demolish a fortress within a few weeks, and the stronghold of a living language, if persistently assailed at the right point of attack, may be overpowered in the same space of time.

It is a waste of labour to travel through the wildernesses of Latin or Sanscrit lore, as a preparation for learning minor languages. While one youth is struggling through a twelve-months' study of Latin, another may easily learn to speak both French and Spanish, and if they then begin Italian together, he who has devoted his time to grammar, parsing, and translating from Latin into English, will be left far behind; because his competitor is already perfectly familiar with that set of Latin

words, which is generally current in all the cognate languages, and he has them ready on the tip of his tongue. Moreover his practical training has especially qualified him for the undertaking; whereas the attention of the other has been drawn to different objects, his memory has not been vigorously exercised in reproducing and re-arranging what he has acquired, and his deliberative method is hostile to the readiness required for colloquial progress.

On the other hand, no benefit can result from learning Latin first, except in training the intellect. But fortunately for mankind in general, intellectual vigour is not required in this pursuit. Every construction which is identical in the two languages will be learned equally well in Italian, and the memory will thus be relieved from learning two sets of words and rules; and every syntactical rule in Latin which is not common to both will occasion delay, and will be of no use. A construction is not difficult to a learner, merely because the grammarian cannot reconcile it with scientific principles, and there is no form of speech which is not acquired and accurately employed by foreign children.

When learning foreign tongues, Englishmen are often more impeded than benefited by their knowledge of Latin and Greek. Anomalous constructions, which puzzle them and check their

progress, produce no such effect on those who have been differently trained. The former, believing in the perfection of the classical system, and in the infallibility of the great principles of grammar, which they regard as the true solvent of all difficulties, are not content to receive an anomaly as a fact, uncouth perhaps, but yet unavoidable and indispensable. They do not adopt it cheerfully, and reserve it for ulterior investigation; but they demur, and leave it as a stumbling-block in their own path. Many good scholars are utterly and irretrievably confounded by the following French construction, which seems to them to defy all the proprieties: "The letter which you sent yesterday," "Epistola quód tu heri transmissam habes;" "The books which he gave me," "Libri quód mihi datos habet." They are told that the French word for *quód* represents also all the cases and genders of the relative pronoun, and that they must mentally substitute *quam* in the first sentence, and *quos* in the second; but still the construction appears to be indefensible, because there is no precedent for it in Latin. But if they will look homewards, they will find an analogous form of speech, whenever a man declares that he knows a French lesson, merely because "he *has said* it," perhaps a month ago. This is the virulent epidemic fallacy which cuts off thousands of aspiring young linguists, and for the cure of which

we recommend homœopathic treatment with infinitesimal doses of words. To learn a lesson perfectly is not the end. It is merely a preliminary step to obtaining the "mastery" over the words.

Our classical system studiously excludes and anathematizes all colloquial profanations of Latin and Greek. Its votaries also exhibit a repugnance and contempt for other languages, which become aggravated when they see the rapid and undeniable success of men of inferior education and capacity.

Such feelings spring from the conviction that the critical knowledge obtained at school and college, is far greater and higher than the colloquial command of words. Yet, as the greater does not include the minor accomplishment, and they cannot see clearly how it leads to it, they secretly mistrust their own conclusions. They manifest great diffidence when invited to translate a few lines impromptu into Latin or Greek. The truth is, as some candidly avow, that they are afraid of committing grammatical errors.

According to the classical theory, a partial or incomplete knowledge of grammar is useless. One trifling mistake gives a shock to a classical reputation. The standard is too high. It is unattainable and unapproachable by those who never make an attempt, except with their pen, to reach it. Even among those who have a thorough knowledge

of Latin and Greek grammar, there are very few who can speak those languages readily, and there is little disposition on the part of scholars in general to admit that it would be a step in advance of their existing attainments. Nevertheless they would be very glad to find themselves in possession of the power of composing *vivâ voce*, as accurately and elegantly as they can write the classical languages; but they regard the proposition as visionary, and they will not entertain it.

There was a time when it was deemed impossible, except for a few highly gifted individuals, to shoot birds flying; and the same sort of feeling makes every one look askance at the suggestion for making oral composition in Latin a common attainment. The bugbear of colloquial familiarities and Latinized slang might, as of old, be invoked with success against so dangerous an innovation; but this in reality is a mere begging of the question. There is a lurking apprehension that oral composition would expose the hollowness of a great deal of very good-looking scholarship. On the other hand, the discovery that the showy accomplishment of the linguist is always symptomatic of a deficiency of brains, is greatly applauded. The honour of confuting this assertion is reserved for some man of unquestionable capacity; but in the meantime it will be proved that oral composition is within the power of

every beginner who "masters" a few practical sentences.

The time seems to have come for the determination of the question, how far the positive acquisition of Latin and Greek ought to be exacted in our public schools. Oral composition is the practical application of the principles of grammar to the words that we *know*, whether it be done unconsciously through imitation and repetition, or consciously through grammar and repetition. In either case it must be commenced with the employment of a few words. It is easier to learn sentences intelligently by heart, than to apply principles; and the power of framing sentences fluently affords the soundest proof of a thorough knowledge of principles. It seems to have escaped attention that language has a power of explaining and revealing itself, far beyond the conceptions of those who have never committed obscure passages to memory *very perfectly*, with a view to diligently employing the involved constructions in oral composition. The manner in which foreign languages develop themselves in children, is calculated to elicit our admiration; but we involuntarily observe the defects and the drolleries more than the felicity with which they use words, the meaning of which has never been explained to them, and constructions, of which the principles are far beyond their comprehension. In a scholastic point of view that

knowledge has not been legitimately attained. There remains therefore the important question, whether boys should be restrained from obtaining such knowledge in Latin, concurrently with the usual scholastic course.

The system here recommended is equally suited for all languages, whether living or dead. But the latter term is no more applicable to a language than to a neglected musical instrument. So long as it remains cast aside, it is mute; but when touched by a master-hand, it will discourse most excellent music. As far as Latin and Greek are concerned, we do not cast them aside; but so long as we occupy ourselves in merely pulling those noble instruments to pieces, we cannot reasonably expect to be able to use them.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON BOOK-WORK.

THERE are many individuals who have attained a goodly reputation as linguists on very easy terms, by reading foreign books with translations. In cognate languages, wherein many words are identical, there is so little difficulty in this process that the restrictions here proposed will probably be regarded as superfluous. But even to those who have had a classical education the limitations are essential.

Dull and dismal as the study may be considered by the majority of mankind, it rapidly recommends itself to those who undertake it with due consideration for the fickleness of the memory. It is much easier to recognise and understand what is placed before the eyes, than to reproduce words from memory, and therefore the progress in reading will necessarily be faster than

in talking. On the supposition that the *sole* object of the learner is to become acquainted with the literature of another language, whether ancient or modern, the following plan is recommended:

Let the learner select some interesting narrative, in which no poetry or colloquy is introduced, and let him employ a friend to mark with figures the passage selected to be read first. The numbers will show which of the words correspond to each other in the translation into his own language.

No lesson should exceed fifteen minutes in length, nor should more than twenty new words, even in a cognate language, be studied at one time. In those of a different order, such as Welsh or Polish, a much smaller number will suffice.

The first lesson, being the basis, should be very carefully studied, and recapitulated in conjunction with its followers for several days in succession.

Two lessons a day, with an interval of four or five hours between them, will yield ample results, especially if intermediate recapitulations be adopted. The principle to be observed in fixing the number of words, is to make the work extremely easy for the memory, and to reduce it in each lesson, if the test shows that the memory has failed or faltered in it. This exercise will so effectually familiarize the eye to the foreign words, that when they are written on separate slips of paper, and

drawn out of a bag, the meaning of each will occur to the recollection *instantaneously*. This perfection ought to be attained in each lesson; and a new one is not to be undertaken unless the test has been rigorously applied just before beginning it. To apply it at the end of a lesson is of no use whatever.

The foreign words must not be even muttered by the student. The eye is to perform the whole operation. But if in its restless activity, it wanders away amongst a mass of other words, imperfect impressions will inevitably be made upon the memory, and these will produce confusion, distraction, and disgust. This danger may be averted by writing out one lesson at a time, and no more; by then laying aside the book; and by refraining from looking into it at other times. The paper on which the lessons are consecutively written should be employed in its stead, and the more the eye wanders over that, the more perfect will be the recollection of its contents. A casual perusal of the book vitiates the experiment as to the power of the memory.

If the learner thinks that his time will be well employed in learning some hundreds of words by sight in one month, let the experiment be fairly made, without modification of any kind. At the end of that period, he may read unrestrictedly; and if he will resort to frequent recapitulations

rapidly conducted, and use translations instead of dictionaries, he will make great progress.

To French people reading English, and *vice versâ*, this process will be found very easy and efficacious, because a great number of words are identical in the two languages; and the similarity of their constructions in narrative composition is such, that many lines in every page may be translated word for word, in the order in which they stand.

It must never be forgotten that the memory is the chief agent. To the understanding the work is as nothing. When one lesson is left unfinished, it is unreasonable to expect to make up for it in a new one. Time lost must be redeemed; and what is left incomplete to-day must be resumed to-morrow.

If these rules are followed, there never will pass a day in which the learner will not be conscious of an augmentation of his knowledge. But the scheme will be treated with injustice, unless the experiments are carried so far as to obtain some familiarity with all the ordinary constructions.

Those who have good assistance will perhaps learn more pleasantly than others; but that is no reason why they should go on faster. If they listen to explanations and dissertations, they will be led out of the prescribed limits, and

lose both the benefit that accrues from allowing the language to reveal itself, and the pleasure which results from self-instruction. No teacher can impart the knowledge and power which are acquired by unassisted exertions.

Owing to the continual reappearance of the commonest words, this exercise will be found to afford a much more extensive acquaintance with the language than might at first sight be anticipated. At the end of a few days, the bulk of each lesson will be greatly increased. But words that are not quite identical with those previously encountered, are not to be treated as old ones. When there is the slightest difference in spelling, they must be reckoned amongst the new ones; because every affix and prefix constitutes a separate word, although the orthographical system may render them in one sense inseparable.

THE LABYRINTH.

DIAGRAM, exhibiting a few of the Evolutions of Two Sentences of Ten Words each.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
His	servants	saw	your	friend's	new	bag	near	our	house.	Her	cousins	found	my	sister's	little	book	in	their	carriage.

A—Minor Combinations or Subdivisions of the two Sentences.

B—Interchanges of those Subdivisions.

C—Interchanges of the two Primary Sentences, containing ten words each.

D—Transpositions of the two Primary Sentences and of their Interchanges.

Additional variations may be effected by adding (1) to any single figure, or by removing it from any double one; excepting figures 10 and 20, which, however, are interchangeable with each other.

Each figure in the Diagram represents that word which stands under it in the Primary Sentences; and each little set of figures constitutes a complete sentence, evolved as a variation from the twenty words.

The remainder of the Evolutions would fill fifty more Diagrams of the same dimensions as this.

A Metabolical Apparatus, for presenting to the eye in irregular succession all the Evolutions of 84 words, in sentences of 21 words in length, and always excluding 63 from sight, will be found described at the end of this work.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

THIS labyrinth, or wilderness of words, is put forth to show the extraordinary expansibility of sentences, and to meet the objections of those who despise small beginnings, and set a high value on lists of unconnected words. The Hebrews use the phrase *mid'bar d'barim* to signify "wilderness of words." The former term is derived from the latter, and the combination is eminently expressive.

The diagram indicates the scope of the exercise afforded to foreigners by committing two sentences to memory, and then proceeding to "master" them. For this purpose a few of the variations must be translated for them; and in changing the words from singular to plural, and from masculine to feminine, and *vice versâ*, the comprehensiveness of the English forms will be discerned by comparison. The greater number of

words required in other languages to express the same ideas, will convince foreigners that the constructions in English are distinguished for their simplicity. In this point of view the mere *study* of the two sentences will be instructive and encouraging; but the whole theory on which this system is based, namely the incapacity of the memory to perform more than a fraction of the work usually imposed upon it in this pursuit, may be fully tested within the same limits. If different individuals co-operating to make a systematic experiment, would subdivide the sentences into shorter couples, they might also ascertain the power of retention which they severally possess. In such a contest the criterion would be their comparative promptitude in translating the interchanges with the same fluency which they display in speaking their mother tongue; for it is the combination of promptitude with fluency that constitutes the "mastery" of all the evolutions of the 20 words.

The figures here represented will suggest to those who take pleasure in such computations, the attempt to discover what sort of sentences in their own language will, when coupled, yield the greatest number of variations; how the syntax of their own, or any other language, can be exemplified in the smallest space; what are the most comprehensively useful forms of colloquial speech for foreigners to

commit to memory; how many words of a foreign tongue are acquired by a child, week by week, when associating with other children of four, six, eight, or ten years old; and how many words are actually employed by adults, who have gone abroad totally unacquainted with the language, and have resided among foreigners for any period from two months to two years. The latter points can be best determined by writing down the sentences which they utter, extending to not less than eight words in length. With the aid of a shorthand writer, such experiments could be made very rapidly.

If an Englishman procures translations of the two sentences into a foreign tongue, in order to "master" them, he will find that their evolutions being fewer, will come into a much more manageable compass than the diagram presents.

The fact that educated men employ only 4,000 words, has been left lying idle for a long time. The only useful purpose to which it can be applied, is to adopt it as the limit for a vocabulary for the learners of foreign tongues, in order to keep them within reasonable restraint. The first vocabulary ranges from 100 to 300 words; the second may contain about 700 more, and the third should comprise 3,000 more. A book of selections from the best dramatic authors, limited to the said 4,000 words, would be a very useful production. No man

requires more words in a foreign tongue than he actually employs in *speaking* his own; and the more carefully he excludes all others, the sooner will he "master" the four thousand.

In that vast preparation which goes on to instruct pupils how to use an unlimited number of unknown words with grammatical propriety, the difficulty with regard to genders occupies a prominent place. For instance, a vague notion prevails that it is possible by efforts of intellect to determine whether a German noun requires *der*, *die*, or *das*.

There is no part of a language in which the principle of limitation is more valuable than in relation to the genders. The supersession of the noun from its leading position harmonizes with this idea. The study of a German grammar creates gigantic difficulties. The articles generally come first in order, and as the definite one has four cases of three genders, there ought, according to the theory that the language is perfect, to be twenty-four different contingencies for which the article has to provide. But, as there is no diversity of genders in the plural number, there are only sixteen contingencies altogether, and only six forms to meet them all. Now the practical knowledge of the articles apart from the nouns, is an abstrusity, which is supposed to be simplified by giving names to the contingencies.

And so far as the reasoning faculty is concerned, the substitute suffices for those who are familiar with those terms, though not to others. But the practical knowledge can only be evinced by the application of the article, and it is therefore unattainable in the abstract.

Conceding that the study of language is most philosophically conducted by investigating each part of speech independently, the simplest test of the accuracy of a man's knowledge of the article, would be to put a Greek book into the hands of the classical student, and to require him to give the German article corresponding to each of those which he found in the passage placed before him. In the case of a non-classical student, it should be an English book, containing pencil marks, to show the genders, cases, and numbers. If he could comply with this requisition at the first sight of each word, his knowledge would be satisfactorily established. But as there are no adequate tests employed, it is assumed, after a certain time, that his knowledge of the articles is sufficient. He then passes on through independent tribes of pronouns, till he arrives at the territory of the nouns. They are of three genders, and there are plenty of rules to explain them, but they are so encumbered with exceptions that they only produce disorder and confusion in the mind of the learner.

It is an unfathomable mystery and a subject of endless consideration among zealous teachers, how to render the genders reasonably easy to beginners. The plan which they adopt, merely in default of a better, is avowedly wrong; but they never take counsel with the shepherd to find out how he happens to recognize each individual out of a thousand sheep at the first glance.

If, according to grammatical theory, there are in German sixteen contingencies for the definite article, the smallest number of illustrations necessary for the exemplification of each of these would be three. Now sentences are the only possible illustrations, and therefore forty-eight sentences must be studied before the article can be clearly understood. The natural process therefore is the most strictly grammatical, because it gives the learner a knowledge of the genders and cases of a number of nouns, combined with the command of the definite article. But this is not the chief among the parts of speech. It is true, that without the article it is impossible to talk; but it is also impossible to do so with the article alone. The fusion of all the parts of speech is their normal state; and the practical acquisition of a language ought not to be postponed until each of them has undergone a minute investigation.

The condition of the article is one of servile dependence. He has no separate existence, and he

is in a false position when treated as an independent member of the family.

The theory that the study of the article in all its cases conduces to the development of the intellectual faculties, is not supported by the observations of teachers. The elements in their separate state are too ethereal a food for the mind. It is not found in practice, that they call forth subtle speculations, either as to the nature of the unseen nouns in the background, or as to the various reasons which impel the Teuton to make so much parade of cases, and so many distinctions for the little word *the*, while some of those distinctions are devoid of differences, and some of the differences remain undistinguished. The various forms have to discharge inconsistent functions, one representing both masculine and feminine; another both singular and plural; one doing duty as nominative masculine, genitive feminine, and dative feminine in the singular, and genitive of all three genders in the plural; besides officiating as a masculine relative pronoun. The best way of securing this Proteus is to seize him in all his different forms; to bind them fast together in one sentence, with a set of nouns containing no ambiguities as to their genders, and to commit it to memory. When he is thus fettered, the feeblest may overpower and "master" him.

The "mastery" of the article necessarily

involves a practical familiarity with all the cases of at least one noun of each gender in each declension, and therefore it is a mere waste of time to attempt to learn the article by itself. A child delivers a sentence as if he had learned it by heart; and so he does learn it, and in a manner much more perfect than that in which lessons are generally acquired. He has learned all the constructions by chance; he has learned the nouns with their articles sticking to them; he has added by chance to his primary sentences, others which have harmonized with them; and the coupled sentences have been interwoven with each other, till the germs of millions of possible sentences are collected in his brain. As the well-worn silk stockings of Sir John maintained their identity through long years of continual worsted darnings, during which the original fabric was wholly superseded by the substitute, so the individuality of that original sentence which formed a basis for one which has just been uttered, though apparently merged and lost, is still there, and it is the same essence which has transmigrated into a new corporeal receptacle.

It is a mistake either to analyse too far, or to generalize too far. We cut down sentences into words, syllables, and letters, to teach how they ought to be reconstructed; and we generalize about genders, in which each separate word must form the subject of a special

acquisition. If several nouns having one termination, have one form of the article generally attached to them, the feeblest understanding will draw the inference, and make the rule for itself, just as well as the grammarian. It will also make the exceptions in common words, in like manner, without any deliberation. The fact that a rustic uses some of them incorrectly, proves nothing more than that his parents and comrades did the same; but if in nine cases out of ten he employs them correctly, that modicum of credit which is due to the natural process is either denied, or very grudgingly conceded, because it is held to be totally neutralized by the errors which are constantly recurring. Whether it may be possible to rectify that one-tenth of a rustic's phrascology, without putting him through a long course of technical grammar, may be determined by having respect to the fact, that in his mind habit has already superseded the necessity for learning the rules relating to nine-tenths of the grammar. It has been ascertained that even in the language of well-educated youths there is a large percentage of grammatical inaccuracy, which it is the crammer's vocation to eliminate; and ultimately that there are very few, indeed, who attain to perfection.

That standard of criticism which exacts perfection, and will not tolerate mediocrity, is too lofty for ordinary men. Perfection is an

admirable standard, but it is only a discouragement when applied to beginners, because it is a goal far beyond their reach. In the scheme here advocated, however, there is great encouragement to the learner, because his goal is always within easy reach. The "mastery" of a sentence with all its variations is a clearly-defined termination to each separate effort; and so long as he continues to restrict himself to one at a time, his knowledge of the little that he has undertaken may be absolutely perfect.

When a boy is sent to school at six or seven years of age to have his phraseology rectified after too much intercourse with servants, it is generally supposed that his study of grammar is the cause of his improvement. But the actual corrective is not to be found in the schoolroom, but in the play-ground, where the shafts of ridicule pointed to one error at a time, operate much more powerfully than the philosophy of grammar. So the illiterate may be gradually weaned from inaccurate forms of speech by dealing with them, one by one, in a systematic manner. When a man elevates himself in society by his own efforts, he reads hard and studies the best authors; but in fact, the blemishes of his phraseology are only removed by a slow process of self-correction, not systematic, but yet of an analogous nature to that which has just been indicated.

In a merely initiatory process, no design can be entertained either of assuming any pretensions to scholarship on the one hand, or of ignoring it on the other. A considerable command over the constructions, cases, and tenses is attainable in an empirical manner; and yet the knowledge is real and thorough. The empirical is generally condemned as superficial; but when there are no pretensions to scholarship, there can be no reason for making deep diggings in quest of that which is so completely on the surface that any body can pick it up.

Most of the current opinions regarding the learning of languages are evasive and discouraging, and they frequently give cover to some fallacy. Generally speaking, every one discoursing on the subject, begins by avowing that he is no linguist, and thus establishes a screen to protect himself. When called on to explain the right way of setting to work, the usual reply is, that we must first learn the names of a good many things, and then a few imperatives; but they do not venture to say how many nouns and verbs are wanted, nor can they specify the third step.

Some say that we must *think* in a foreign language before we can speak it well; but they do not explain how to begin that process of thinking in an unknown tongue. If they mean merely that those who think in it, speak it well; and that those

who speak it well, think in it, there is nothing puzzling or alarming in the proposition. But it is not by thinking in a language, but by *not* thinking in it, that children speak it idiomatically and fluently. A boy who has been reproved for some habitual inelegance of speech, generally resumes it in the playground; and if called to order, he replies, that he said it "without thinking." This is obviously a true and valid excuse. For that which has been learned by rote does not call for any thinking, in the elevated sense of the word; and it is to save beginners from what looks like hard thinking, when they ought to be talking, that the plan of learning practical sentences by rote is advocated.

Whether that very hard thinking, which after a long course of critical analysis, seems to be called forth, when the first attempts are made to compose sentences orally, can be considered a genuine intellectual effort, or only a severe struggle to think, let every man determine from his own experience.

There is an impulse given by success, with which every one is familiar. That feeling often amounts to triumph, when the power of delivering complete sentences in a newly acquired language is suddenly attained. It is a triumph over the confusion of brain which ensues from attempting to think about too many things at once. To obviate that difficulty, we limit the number of the beginner's

considerations to a minimum. Success is the necessary result; and success communicates that stimulus which is so much wanted in this pursuit, to counteract the disappointments that await those who make precocious attempts to converse.

Some say that it is useless to learn foreign tongues, because they are so soon forgotten. It is true that when utterly neglected they are gradually lost, but it is very easy to maintain them in full vigour by devoting a few minutes twice a week to oral composition in each language; and it is discreditable to lose an elegant accomplishment through a childish distaste for so light a work.

Some say that it is with words, as with birds. The larger the covey within ear or gunshot, the more they expect to bag by firing promiscuously into the thickest part. It is not good sportsmanship, but as it seems to save trouble, as it requires no discrimination, nor even intelligence, and as many good performers commenced in that way, the simple process of listening is very popular, and it is generally considered to be sound and effective. But unfortunately even when the learner makes a successful shot he does not take the trouble to secure the game. He would rather be seen with an empty game-bag, than with three little birds as the result of a whole day's sport; and, his arithmetical lore does not suggest to him that the results of three

months' acquisitions, even on that small scale, would form a very respectable stock of words.

To wait passively for the formation of a habit which is essentially active, betrays rather a deficiency than a superabundance of sagacity. But the subject has been rendered so obscure by the general acceptance of crude unexamined notions, that there are few who endeavour either to reason out the causes of their own failure, or to overcome that abject helplessness and incapacity for self-instruction, which are engendered by unsound methods of teaching.

The powers of attention and of retention are never equal in any two persons, nor are the results ever precisely equal for two days in succession in the same person. To work at about half power is the only way to ensure regularity of progress. We know that doubling the steam power will not make a proportionate addition to the speed of a ship, and we may learn something from that fact in regard to the exercise of the memory. The latter is admitted to be a leaky vessel, a cask from which the wine is constantly escaping. In the instance of a child, the useless words are always running out, because he does not employ any but the commonest; but with adults the case is reversed, because they neglect the common to grasp at new ones. They are also influenced by their caprice, to relinquish words or forms

of speech which are not to their taste; forgetting that what are called the obliquities, delinquencies, and deformities of a language, are the very things to which they ought to attend most. They are the points of divergence and contrast which constitute the characteristics of the language, and without which a foreigner cannot speak it well.

The habit of speaking a foreign tongue is not the result of continuous study. All our training, however, tends to produce the impression that as nothing *great* is attainable without hard labour, so this *small* accomplishment exacts severe study. The second-hand performance of learning ready-made combinations is thought unworthy of a scholar. The only exception is made in favour of the most unpractical portion of a language—poetry. In an educational course, the exercise of the understanding is the prominent consideration, and the critical study of language does call forth severe intellectual exertion. Hence arises very naturally the inference that this attainment, which little children make light of, is very difficult, and thence springs that universal repugnance, which extends even to a small experiment with twenty words of an outlandish tongue.

The commencement of a language is always repulsive and alarming; but if it is ever to be spoken, it is impossible to escape from the initiation. Here it is presented in a smaller

compass than in any grammar or manual, and the power of expression resulting from the thorough knowledge of one hundred words is shown to transcend all the highest flights of imagination. The contemplation of the first plunge into a river on a cold morning may be disagreeable; but no improvement in the temperature can be effected by standing shivering in the keen East wind, nor is it of any use to move to the right or left to look for a warmer place.

It would be tedious to recite the groundless objections which, under an infinite variety of modifications, are arrayed in opposition to this pursuit. When driven from one hiding place, the objector takes refuge in others, from which it is mere waste of time to try to dislodge him.

One of the greatest obstacles to colloquial progress is the dearth of imagination, and the want of method, both in teachers and pupils. They do not know what to talk about, nor in what manner to diversify their conversation without using unknown words. Every thing said is either too easy or too difficult, and there is no medium. When the pupils try to converse with foreigners, they deviate still farther from the proper course; because strangers can have no idea of their vocabulary, nor of the extent of their knowledge. This defect can only be remedied by constantly shuffling the words, and translating the variations

of the sentences which have been committed to memory.

In our scholastic career, oratorical and logical diction forming the standard to which we are expected to aspire, our compositions are very properly judged with severity. But the same criteria are cruelly inappropriate when applied to the speaking of modern tongues, by people who, with all their best exertions, can never rise beyond mediocrity, either in thought, or in the mode of expressing it in their own language. The half-witted resolution never to attempt to talk the foreign tongue, until they can do it better than certain friends of theirs, is the illegitimate offspring of that high standard. They are determined to reach the higher branches of the tree, without touching the stem or the lower branches. Children use a ladder, which makes the ascent easy; but the bystanders imagine that it is accomplished by the flights of a genius, which they are themselves conscious that they do not possess.

Many refuse to deal with easy sentences, because no credit can accrue from them; and they prefer those which, being difficult, involve them in no reproach if they break down in the attempt to translate them. They are ashamed of being thought mere beginners; and therefore they place themselves in an advanced position, which they cannot maintain, except by

observing that golden silence, which far surpasses the silver of their speech. If, when called on to translate easy sentences, they resent the proposal as an insult to their understanding, and if they also refuse to practise in private, they can never succeed. With great labour, and admirable ingenuity, they build a ship of surpassing magnitude; but when she is completed, they find out that the noble structure is a great deal too large to be launched.

We have not a word to say in depreciation of that extensive eye-knowledge of a living language, which many men, to their great mortification, discover to be inoperative when they go abroad; inasmuch as they can neither understand, nor make themselves understood. But viewing the colloquial as the grand desideratum, we regard as unreal and impractical all that cannot be readily reproduced. In plain terms, we treat it as unknown. The magnificence of the unknown has passed into a proverb. The practically known may be, in comparison, as a mole-hill beside a mountain; but teachers labour indefatigably in adding to the mountain, while the mole-hill is completely overlooked. All the new acquisitions are carefully treasured up; and they are recollected when the familiar words are reproduced before the eyes in books. But the practical part is neglected, inasmuch as no set of words has been separated

for daily employment in oral composition. The consequence is that to many who imagine themselves to be in the right course, the labour appears to be aimless, endless, and hopeless.

When the industrious student attempts to converse, his extensive knowledge of words is his first difficulty, and he deplores his inability to deploy them with readiness. But his accurate critical knowledge of the constructions is another obstacle; because when he detects himself tripping in the formation of a sentence, his school habits prompt him to stop short, in a state of discomfiture. But the remedy is very simple; for if he will lay aside his books, and exercise himself with a few coupled sentences, he must succeed. With all his large store of knowledge about the language, he has not made a beginning in the colloquial part; but he may do so at any moment by "mastering" any sentence which he may please to select as the basis of his new undertaking. This fresh departure is the only effectual course for learners at every stage of advancement. The stream of their eloquence, although dammed up at first, will burst forth with vigour when the restrictions are removed; and the narrower the channel in which it is confined, the greater will be its impetuosity.

We have shown that imitation is one of the sources of success. It was by practising imitative composition that Sir William Jones distinguished

himself as a linguist. Latin versification is imitative, and it tends to produce good scholarship. It is beneficial, because the beginner has before him the translations of perfect models; because his efforts are definite and limited; and because in each lesson a series of successes is gained under urgency. Oral exercises in prose on the same limited scale would soon lead to great facility in composition in any language.

During a long course of study, it often happens that for several months at a time no progress is made. The teacher and the pupil are both conscious of this very untoward fact; but they are unable to explain it, seeing that there is no abatement of zeal or attention on either side. They have unbounded confidence in the efficacy of parsing, and of rehearsing the same rules day by day; and they have implicit faith in the virtue of turning over the leaves of a dictionary, and then guessing which is the right translation of a word. The failure is, therefore, quite unaccountable to both of them. But if oral composition were resorted to, there would be a lively exercitation of the memory, which, by revealing with precision the deficiency in the learner's practical knowledge of any one construction, would lead to a selection of sentences which, in one sitting, would supply that defect. In such exercises, none but very well known, familiar words should be introduced into the

sentences at first; and a dictionary should not be employed at all. The mischief done by the insertion of one or two unknown words in each sentence, outweighs all the benefit to be derived from the practice of oral translation.

It is worthy of remark that teachers of languages seldom select what is purely practical for a pupil to commit to memory; nor do they limit him to learning so little, that he cannot help retaining every word. They feel a delicacy about marking off one portion of a lesson to be retained, because that would be equivalent to dooming the rest to oblivion. That result, they well know, is inevitable; but they dare not formally recognize and grapple with the fact. The practice of recapitulation is adopted, but not to much purpose; because too much has been undertaken each day; and therefore the exhumation and rehearsal of the words leads only to a galvanic resuscitation of them, as a preliminary to their being recommitted to the tomb.

Some teachers recommend themselves to public notice by announcing that they do not require their pupils to learn anything by heart. They ask a boy's parents to reflect how much they themselves learned, and how little they have retained, of the passages committed to memory in early life.

There are people who recite poetry in

profusion, which they profess that they never committed to memory. How the verses happen to be reproduced exactly in the author's words, they are not at liberty to explain; but we are left to infer that it is the result of headwork, and not of the humble faculty of memory, much less of the despised practice of learning by rote.

When there is pleasure taken in a task, it becomes stamped on the memory by frequent unconscious recitations. When little interest is taken in it, periodical repetition alone will enable the memory to retain it. But when the task is absolutely disagreeable, as is generally the case in learning a foreign language, very frequent repetitions become indispensable; for without them our acquisitions can make no durable lodgment either in the head, or in the heart, or in the memory.

In England, females are said to have a particular aptitude for languages; but men might possibly succeed equally well, if they heard French or German talked for hours every day, and if they were compelled to join in the conversation, instead of perpetually puzzling themselves with the analysis of tough sentences. School girls speak more fluently and idiomatically than boys do, because their method is more practical. Not being subjected to the depressing, demoralizing influence, produced by being stopped short, whenever an inaccuracy or a difficulty occurs, girls display more

self-possession, and less hesitation, in stringing words together.

Moreover, needlework and other feminine pursuits, are favourable to language-learning, because they leave the vocal organs at full liberty. Thus a party of foreign needlewomen might arrange to have useful sentences uttered for imitation and repetition every hour, without any serious impediment either to their handiwork or their conversation. This is the principle already in operation in schools, where there is a perpetual recurrence of a set of questions and remarks, relating to the implements, the materials, or the ingenuities required in the various occupations in which the girls are engaged. But, as they are their own models, their pronunciation and phraseology are necessarily imperfect; and as the repetitions are not systematic, the sentences not being spoken exactly in the same words every time, the results are not so satisfactory as they ought to be.

The mild Hindoo, whose education is generally as scanty as his wardrobe, exhibits great facility in picking up a language colloquially. He knows what sentences he will have to use as a traveller; he employs some one to tell him how to say them; and he learns them by rote, one at a time. His wants are very few; he uses his whole stock of words every day; and, by imperceptibly small additions, it increases. But as he learns it from

those who speak inelegantly, as his knowledge is very limited, and as he has no idea of explaining the rationale of his plan, an Englishman scorns to adopt it. And yet the colloquial facility of the illiterate servant, at the end of each week's chatter, is, in many instances, greater than that of his educated master, at the end of each month's study.

Blind people have also good success, because they do not impede their own progress by reading and writing; and they discern the difference between knowing words thoroughly, and knowing them by sight.

The plan of bringing a foreign nurse into a family, in order that children may learn her language, is supposed to be perfect, because it is generally successful: but the process is almost always slow, and sometimes, from want of sympathy between her and the children, it fails altogether. But every child has an irresistible impulse to imitate other children; for when separated from his own comrades, and thrown into the company of little foreigners, for three hours a day, he makes rapid progress in conversing with them.

Why this law of nature has not been more generally adopted as the basis of action, by parents and missionaries, it is hard to say. The scheme works itself out to perfection in the torrid zone,

where children who play with their little neighbours in the streets all day long, are often heard to speak three or four languages vernacularly.

It is a mistake to suppose that one language comes more naturally to a child than another. Amongst the English residents in Bengal, there are many children who speak nothing but Hindustani. They do not even understand a word of English, because neither their parents nor their attendants employ it in speaking to them. In other parts of India, English children generally speak two, and sometimes three or four languages. This is also very common on the shores of the Mediterranean. Everything depends on their models, and a child who hears no language, will never learn to speak at all. If two or three infants were brought up in seclusion, attended by well-educated deaf and dumb nurses, they would imitate the sounds of birds and beasts, and would communicate with each other and with their nurses by signs and shouts; but they would never be able to talk, except with their fingers.

If two English boys, three or four years old, associated during play hours with two little foreigners, it seems probable that that language would obtain the ascendancy which pertained to the individual who, by strength of character, could exercise supremacy over the rest. Such experiments might easily be made in any large

city, and it would be interesting to observe the results.

When a missionary lands in a foreign country, with two or three children, he ignores the well-known fact that they are far more competent than he is, to teach the little savages English. If the latter were well scrubbed, and admitted, one at a time, to play with his children for three hours a day, they would talk in a few months, or perhaps weeks, as fluently and copiously as their white playmates. Moreover, the language would be genuine English, not the gibberish usually spoken by foreigners. Five or six children, of different ages, might thus learn to speak in the first twelve months, and the number might easily be doubled in each succeeding year.

Nothing but the injudicious interference of the white man could arrest the success of this plan. The white children should be prevented from learning the foreign tongue at first, because if they could converse in it they would cease from speaking English, and the scheme would utterly fail. Even at three years of age, children show this amount of discrimination; for they see, or feel, that the fitness of things requires that each person should be addressed in his own language.

Care should be taken not to allow anybody to speak broken English in presence of any of the children of either race; because a few minutes

spent in company with such a person would corrupt their language.

By the adoption of these suggestions in a Mission, a great waste of time and temper might be spared. The white children would become the unconscious instruments of civilisation, by teaching their playmates to speak our language; and, in after-life, they would be the fittest agents for proclaiming the Gospel to the heathen, in the purity of the native tongue.

There would spring up an English-speaking community, amongst whom every new missionary might be actively employed from the day of his arrival in the country, instead of devoting himself almost exclusively to study. At present many of the missionaries are not allowed to learn foreign languages in England. This fact is full of significance. But if there be any virtue in the child's process, the young men might learn the pronunciation from a native in England, and then they might employ their time very profitably during the voyage, in committing a stock of well-chosen texts to memory. By this means they would involuntarily learn to express their thoughts with fluency in Biblical language, and to converse with the natives, within a very few days after their arrival at their destination.

It does not seem to have been laid down that when men speaking uninflected languages approach

the grammar of a highly inflected one, a greater degree of caution should be exercised than when the conditions are reversed. A German comes down hill to learn English, but it is a hard pull for an Englishman to ascend to German. A classical education is, no doubt, a good training in relation to the power of understanding inflections; but the amount of intelligence required in this respect is very minute indeed. It also imparts thoughtfulness about each individual word to be uttered, but the said thoughtfulness is only an impediment to fluency of speech. A German can do himself no harm by seeing that *my* and *his* represent twelve words in his own dialect, but an Englishman is bewildered by seeing that there are six ways of translating each of those words into German.

The paradigms of the two languages indicate their relative difficulty. When the system of beginning with sentences is adopted, the complications of the grammar, every one of which is a novelty and a puzzle, are kept out of sight. On taking up the paradigm, beginners meet with the contents of perhaps a hundred pages of grammar closely condensed; but they find on inspection that many of the items have been "mastered," and that the synopsis is not so intricate as it looks. They soon discover by analogy the relations of the known to the unknown words; and it is on this account

that all explanations and technical terms have been excluded from the paradigms.

If scientific principles are to be employed in teaching, with a view to the attainment of rapid progress, all that is irregular and exceptional in a language ought to be excluded, until that which is regular has been "mastered." There ought to be no laws laid down for the learner, except such as are to be inflexibly observed; and those which are liable to be constantly broken ought not to be mixed up with them. Exceptions may prove rules theoretically, but in practice they disprove them.

In order to qualify a traveller to undertake new languages in an independent manner, it is desirable that he should invent or adopt some phonetic system, and become perfectly familiar in practice with its minutest details. But even when it is thoroughly known, it will be of no use in respect to an unfamiliar tone or sound. It is only after the pronunciation has been acquired, that any writing can be useful. Phonetic practice is an excellent discipline for those whose handwriting is illegible; but to undertake it at the same time with the commencement of a new language is to aggravate the difficulties of both. In the first instance it ought to be applied to a foreign language which the learner can pronounce well, and then to his own; for this experience will lead him to an appreciation of its exact value, in regard to the utterance

of sounds which he has *not* previously learned to pronounce.

It is generally considered very easy to make acquaintance with a language, so far as to understand what people say. This, however, is merely inferential knowledge, inasmuch as it depends largely on the observation exercised upon the matter in which the foreigners may be engaged, the tones of their voices, and the expression of their faces. But as a positive knowledge is often acquired in that manner by mere habituation, without the use of books, it stands to reason that great benefit may be derived from having passages read aloud to us, in which it has been previously ascertained that the words are all common and the sentences short and simple. To have the same sentences daily read very rapidly by a foreigner, with a few additions to them, would necessarily lead to perfect familiarity with them in a short time, without laying any burden on the memory. Every addition being fully explained beforehand, the exercise would be much easier than that of listening to desultory conversations; while it would also be a valuable aid to that general familiarization with the sounds of the spoken language which, to some people, is very difficult of attainment.

This exercise may be despised, as too easy. It certainly does not call for any intellectual vigour,

but its simplicity forms its strongest recommendation; for graduated exercises might be made, which would soon lead to a rapid apprehension of all ordinary passages in books. By parity of reasoning, the same process ought to be introduced into the study of Latin. Some passage being thoroughly explained, studied, analyzed, and understood, the pupil might reasonably be expected, without the aid of his eyes, to give the English translation. At first, one short sentence would be sufficient for a very tender beginner; but whatever stage of progress he may have reached there should be special care taken that it should not cost him any effort. It might be carried on separately, and independently of the ordinary work, and as the time occupied would be extremely short, there would be no hardship in it. The knowledge of the constructions thus acquired, would enable the pupil more readily to understand his ordinary lessons; and the test of its soundness would be the daily introduction into each sentence, of some one alien word, borrowed from another quarter, but well known to the pupil.

The strictly imitative character of this method is such, that a foreigner might be furnished with nothing but Shakspearian sentences, purely comical, or highly tragical, according to the humour of his preceptor. The reproduction of these in the ordinary transactions of life, would

produce very exhilarating effects. So Plato and Xenophon would afford charming conversational Greek, for two men assisting one another in oral composition. For graver work, apart from the colloquial branch, the "mastery" of a chapter of the Old Testament in Hebrew would enable a man, in testing this scheme by himself, to rub off the rust that may have accumulated upon his early acquisitions; but the grammars of that language are not to be touched by beginners. The syntax is a series of anomalies and discords, and the paradigms are appalling, when approached without due preparation.

In changing from one language to another in colloquial exercises, it is advisable to rehearse one or two sentences of the new one, in order to banish that which has just been used. When a beginner is learning two languages at once, he may chance to intermingle them unless he takes this precaution. But it is better to learn one at a time; for the results thus obtained will be greater, and there will be less chance of confusion.

The object of this work has been to show how the first approaches to a new language ought to be conducted, so as to avert the disappointment and mortification which are often experienced when men fail, after devoting themselves earnestly, and bestowing a great deal of valuable time on the attainment. The different degree of talent which

people possess forms a subject of much talk, but not of much thought. The remark is generally made, in self-justification, that no two men have the same turn for this pursuit. By referring it to a special faculty or taste, it is gently removed beyond the pale of discussion. But no man can be said to have tested his own powers if, after overwhelming his memory with a crushing load, he has succumbed. Unless he does common justice to himself, without instituting any comparison with others, his experience under such circumstances is worth nothing. It has no bearing on the subject at all. The predominance of chance in the progress of children, learning foreign languages, has been noticed; and the law of numbers, applied to words, shows how half a dozen short colloquial sentences, accidentally picked up, may form the foundation for a rapidly acquired familiarity with even a difficult language. But it is not easy to say what constitutes difficulty in a language, seeing that the feeblest intellect is amply sufficient for the work. The inability to communicate with precision the manner in which any individual has "mastered" a language, in a short time, with very little exertion, is universally acknowledged. It is said that no two minds can go through the same identical process; and hence the opinions and the skill of the most accomplished teachers are often set at nought. After all, a language, when acquired by a thousand men in a

thousand different ways, is the same, and their inability to retrace their path through the wilderness is very remarkable. It shows the absence of methodical procedure, or a deviation from it, of which they cannot be unconscious.

There is the same want of method in the operations of those who, when thrown amongst savages, have contrived to learn a little of their language, but so little that when they recount their adventures, they shrink from any attempt to give a detailed account of the manner in which, and the rate at which they acquired it. How to act under such circumstances is a problem which may be solved without much difficulty by men of some experience as linguists. It is not necessary to traverse oceans and continents to find barbarians to practise upon. Every foreigner landing on our shores with his family, if altogether ignorant of our language, is as much a barbarian to us, as we are to him. The most ready way of learning some sentences would be to fraternise with his children; to offer them attractive gifts; to note down their utterances; and to imitate, repeat, and verify them, in a series of small experiments. It would not be so easy to deal with old, taciturn, sensible savages, who could see the uselessness of dealing out words to a white-faced stranger, whose presence had no tendency to inspire them with garrulity. But even with them the process ought

to be conducted on the same principle; and they should be conciliated and rendered communicative by pleasant surprises. The names of things might of course be quickly extracted from them, but very little good would result from learning even a large number of bare words.

When learned men are consulted as to what they consider the most important point for a beginner, they are fond of giving Hamlet's oracular reply, "Words, Words, Words." In advising a young architect, it would be equally rational to say "Bricks, Bricks, Bricks." Hamlet had some method in his madness, but there is a melancholy negation of method here. The natural course is to learn the most useful sentences, and assiduously to interchange new words with them. For a beginner, therefore, the true motto is "Action, Action, Action."

NOTE.

WHILE this work has been going through the press, a machine of singularly ingenious construction has been invented and patented, by an enthusiastic admirer of the system which it describes. Adopting the theory of the quasi-mechanical nature of the operation by which idiomatic sentences, when learned by rote, germinate and expand into a whole language, and being experimentally convinced of its truth by his personal application of it to ancient Greek, Mr Long has devised an apparatus which, when turned on its axis, exhibits an endless succession of the variations of four sentences of twenty-one words each. It consists of a box eighteen inches in length and six in depth, having three rows of windows in front, each of which faces a little chamber, wherein cubes are placed which rotate whenever the box is turned. Each cube has a word written on each of its four sides, and by means of a device for producing irregularity in their rotations, a fresh combination of twenty-one words appears at the little windows after each revolution of the box. The cubes are removable at pleasure, and the learner may write upon them whatever words he may select, due consideration being made, as provided for in Pages 50 and 51, for preventing any deviation from idiom, grammar, or sense.

The application of colours, as suggested in Page 132, to the English nouns or verbs, so as to indicate to the learner the declensions and conjugations to which they severally belong, is effected by the insertion of ground glass on the facets of the cubes, and the use of coloured chalks to write upon them.

The sentences may be reduced to any length. If they are of seven words each, so as to occupy only one row of windows, the number of combinations of that length will be 4^7, or 16,384. If they fill two rows, there will be 4^{14}, or 268,000,000 combinations of fourteen words each. If the three rows are filled up, 4^{21}, or 4,000,000,000,000 of combinations of twenty-one words each will result. It is not intended that the beginner shall go through all these evolutions, because it would require more than 100,000 years to do so.

The impartiality of this apparatus in giving sentences to be translated into Greek, is equal to that of a first-class Examiner.

In its property of excluding from before the eyes all those words that are not wanted at the moment, there is a remarkable coincidence with the theory enounced on that subject. Nature shows that they ought to be so banished from sight.

That dearth of imagination and method in teachers and pupils, which is deplored in Page 238, is remedied by this contrivance, because it shuffles the whole of the known words, and it is impossible that any unknown word can intrude to disturb or confuse the learner. While it thus performs the functions of an exercise-book of unimaginable dimensions, it affords graduated lessons, exactly to the

number required in each individual instance, at any stage of progress.

The machine represents the brainbox of a person who has learned exactly 84 words of a foreign language, and has neither seen nor heard one word more. It secures limitation, exclusion, interchanging, repetition, and imitation. That instantaneous production of the words in grammatical and idiomatic sequence, which constitutes "mastery," is also personated. The machine is therefore an interesting embodiment and exemplification in walnut-wood of the whole system.

But it has other virtues also; for problems in arithmetic may be introduced into it, so as to lead learners gently on from numeration to the stiffest questions in the Rule of Three. The art of Short-hand writing is communicable thereby; and there are many educational purposes, which it will subserve in a more agreeable manner than the generality of merely mechanical performers. Let it not be supposed that it supplies brains or information. Its vocation as an instrument of education will be to receive into its mystic chambers that lesson which the pupil first of all commits to memory, with its variations. The lesson may be very short, and the items few in number, but by slow degrees they increase. And as little by little is added to them, that amalgamation of them, which is the great object of teaching, is effected by requiring the pupil to reproduce the previously imparted knowledge, to apply the principles thereof, and to "master" one thing before he undertakes another.

But there is another remarkable purpose to which Mr Long has adapted this machine. The metabolical presentation of words, suggested to his inventive faculty the idea

of producing musical combinations on similar principles. The provision whereby grammar and idiom are preserved intact, throughout that inconceivable number of sentences, being so applied to bars of music, that the time and key are in the first instance secured, the revolutions of the machine produce Eolian measures, in the same multitudinous variety. This analogy appears again in Page 116, where the interchangeable rudiments of a sentence are manifestly the bars in the music of speech.

This beautifully simple apparatus shows that much of what is called the intellectual, is subject to mechanical laws; whilst it also elucidates one of the many occult harmonies in creation.

THE END.

PRINTED BY C. W. REYNELL, LITTLE PULTENEY STREET, HAYMARKET, W.

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 11 March, 2020